

EXHIBIT A

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Islam et al.

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(54) **SQUARE FILTER FUNCTION TUNABLE OPTICAL DEVICES**

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G02B 27/00

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **359/260**; 359/359; 359/578;
349/198

(58) **Field of Search** 359/107, 108,
359/245, 247, 259, 260, 484, 578, 586–590;
349/18, 74, 86, 114, 198; 372/20

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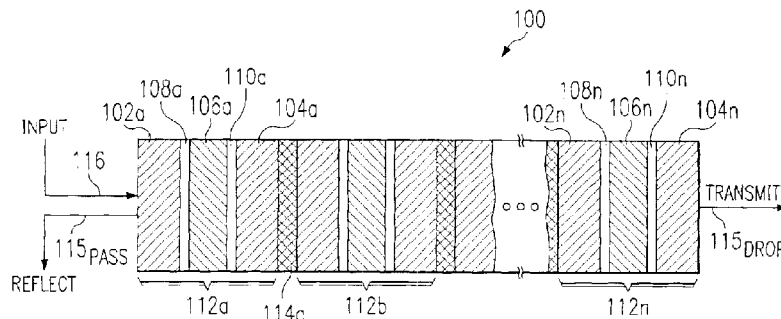
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A tunable optical device includes a thin film device. The thin film device includes a plurality of cavities each including an electro-optic material. The electro-optic material includes an optical characteristic capable of being manipulated by application of an electric field. In this embodiment, at least some of the plurality of cavities are coherently coupled to others of the plurality of cavities. In this embodiment, the plurality of cavities include a sufficient number of cavities to result in an approximately square frequency response for the device.

65 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets



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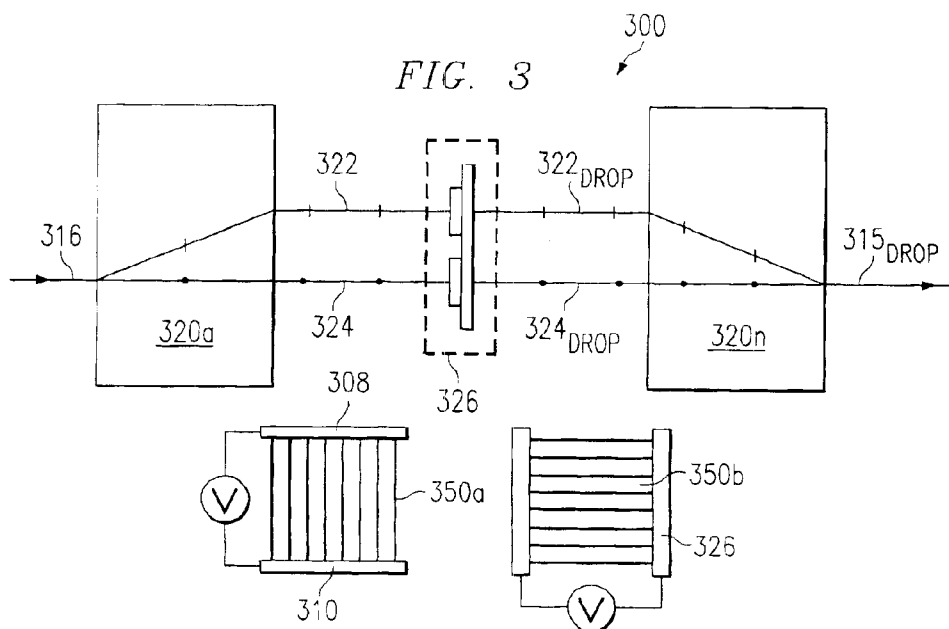
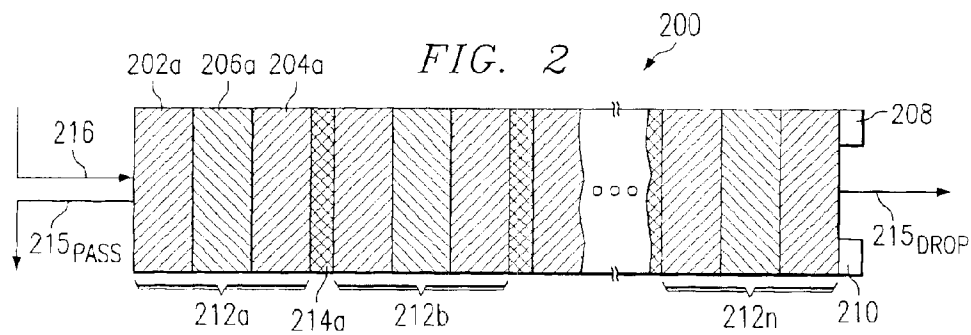
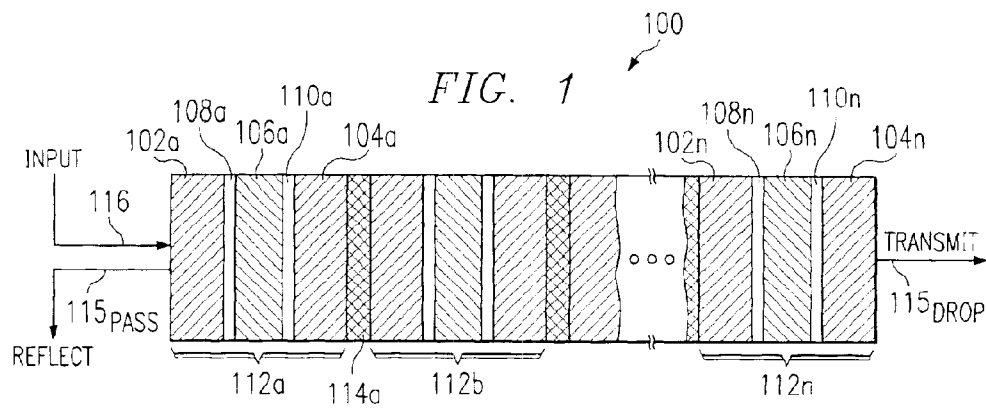
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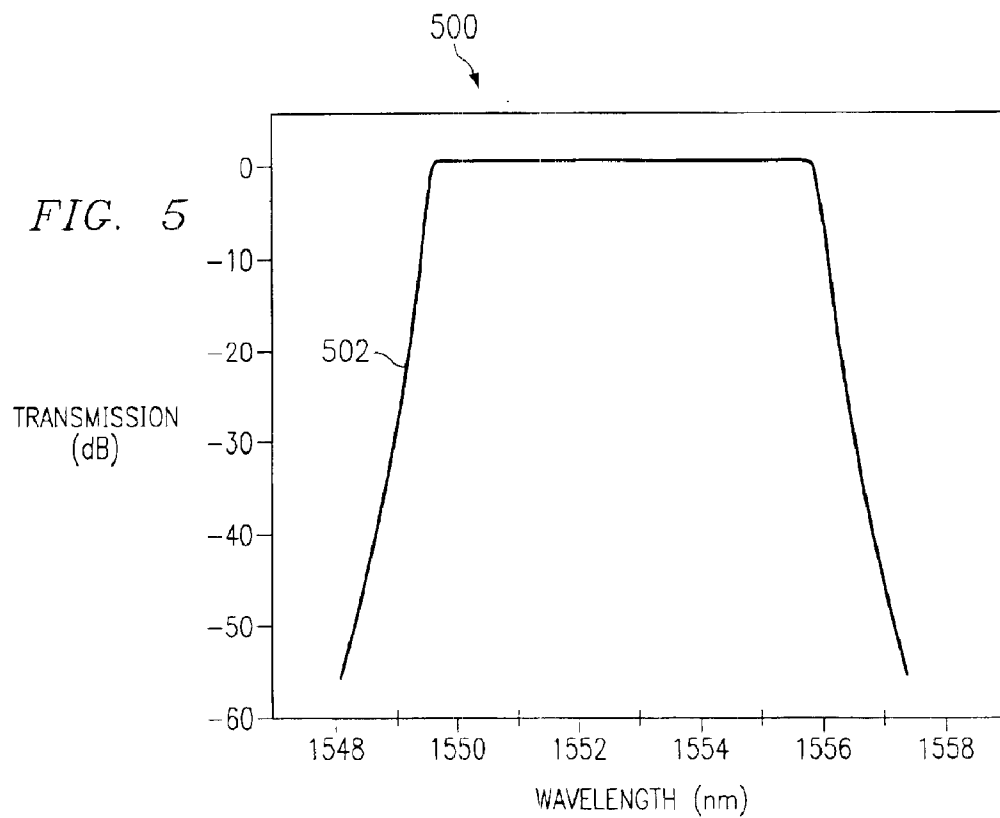
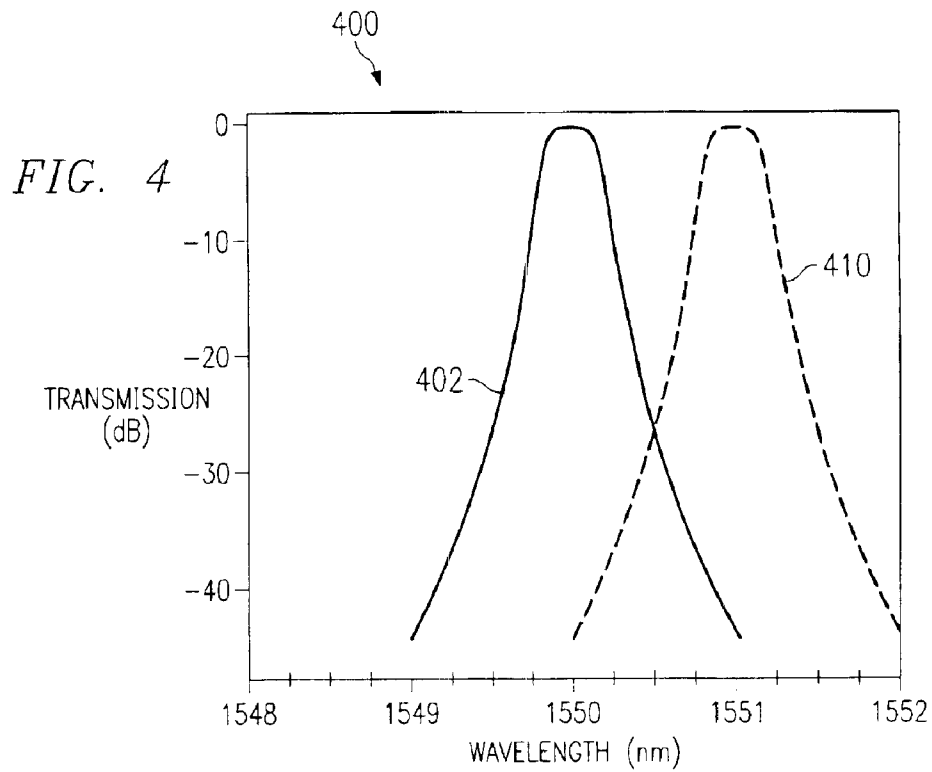


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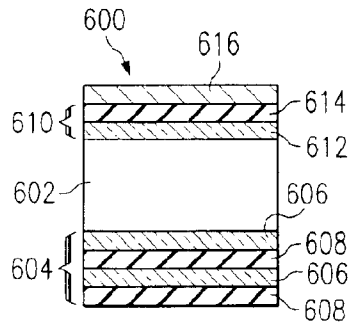


FIG. 6A

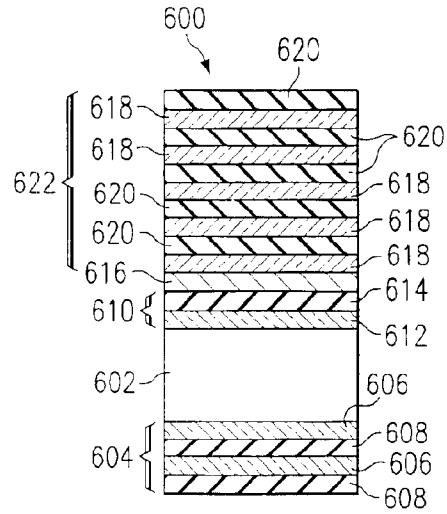


FIG. 6B

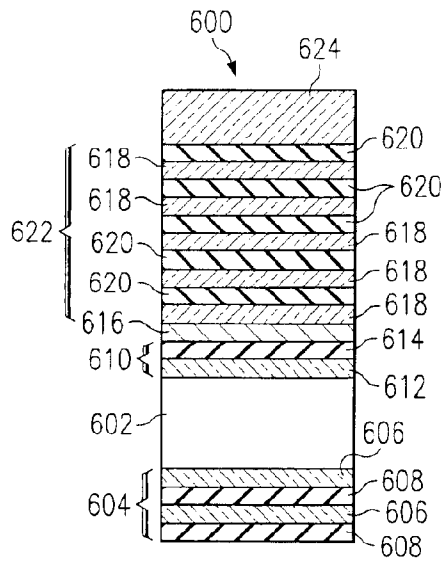


FIG. 6C

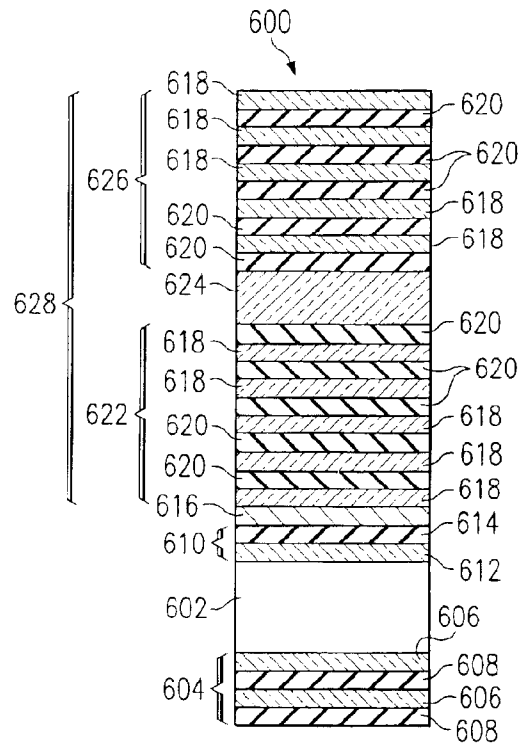
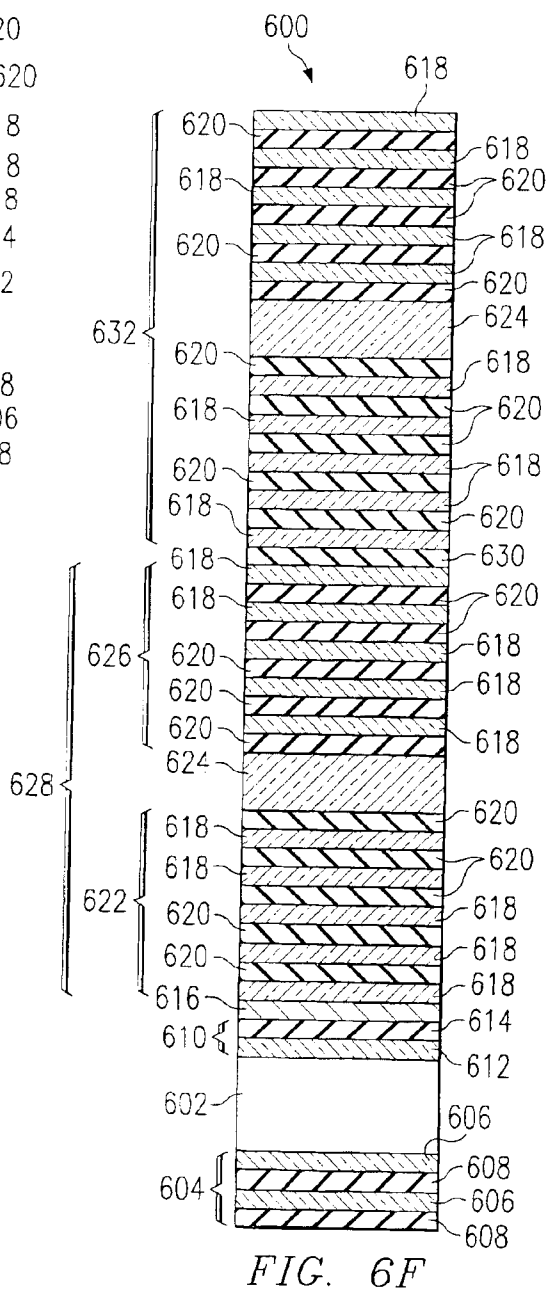
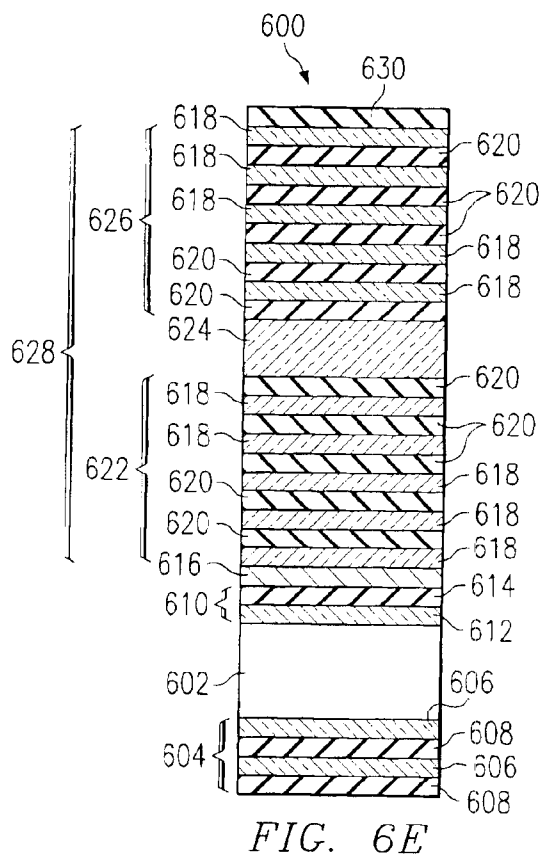


FIG. 6D



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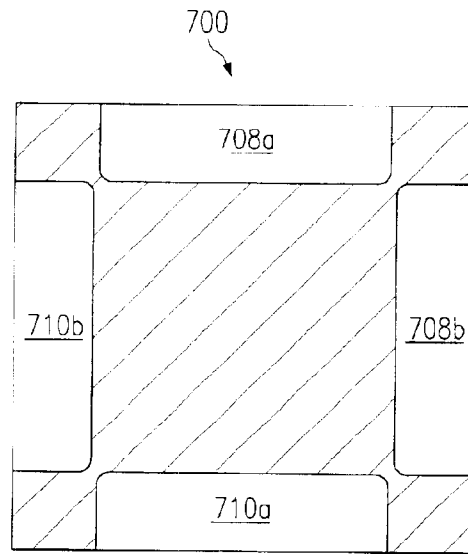
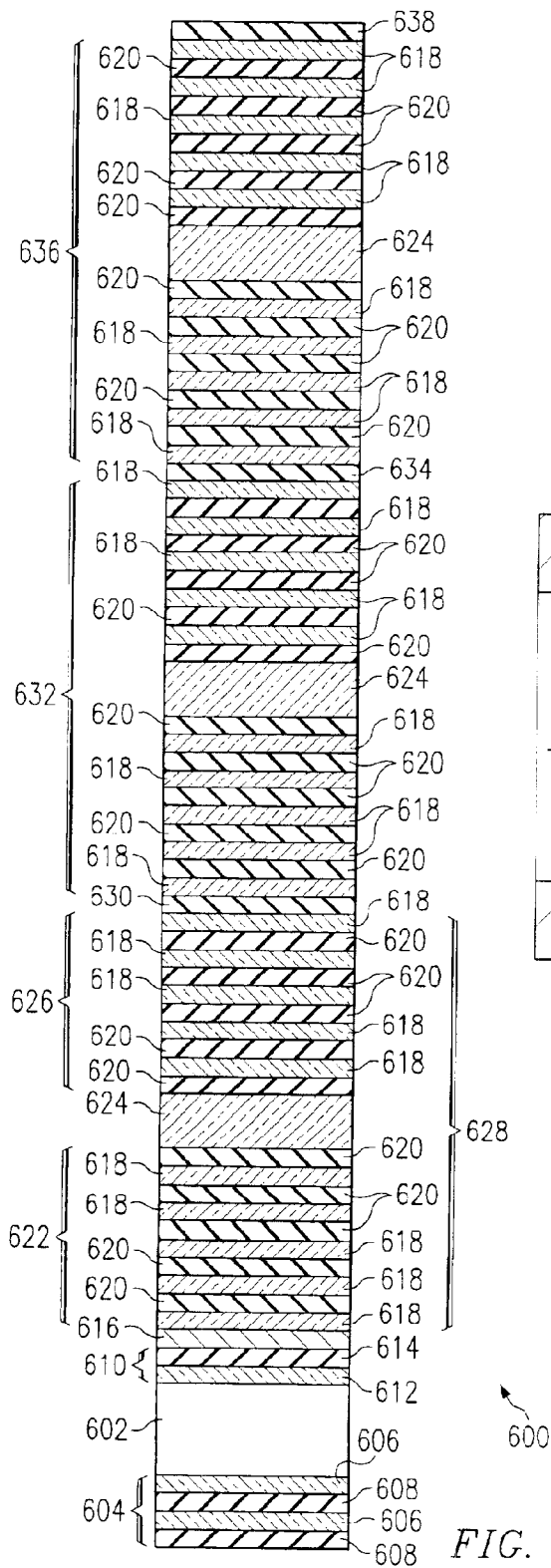


FIG. 7

FIG. 6G

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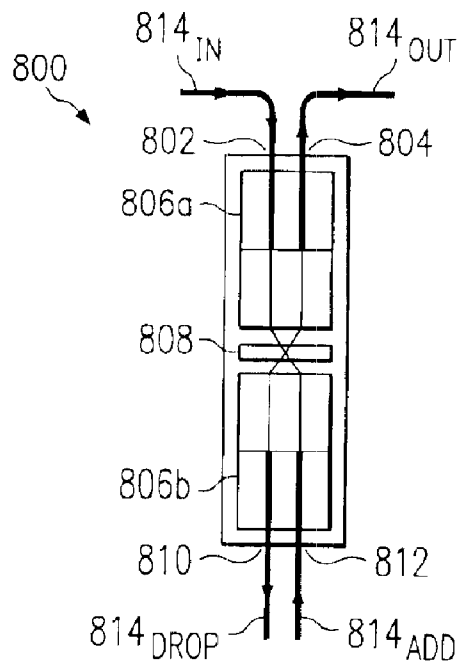


FIG. 8A

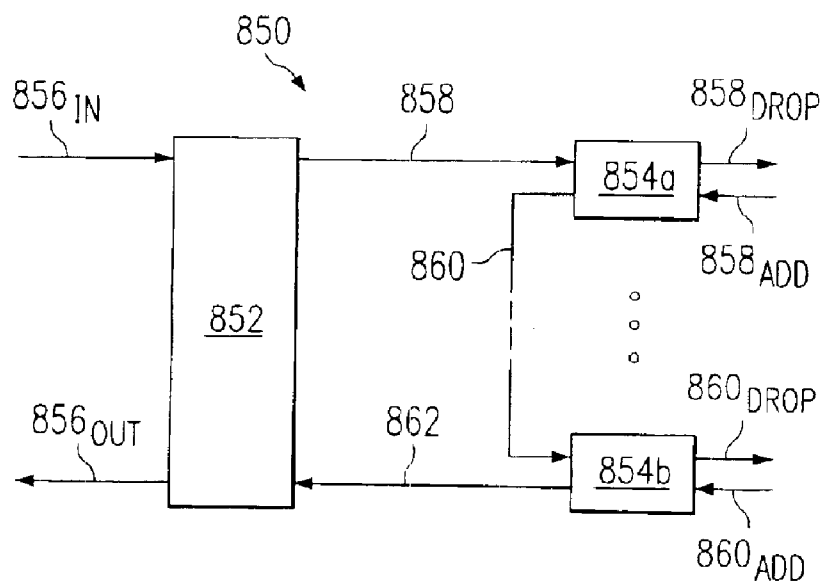
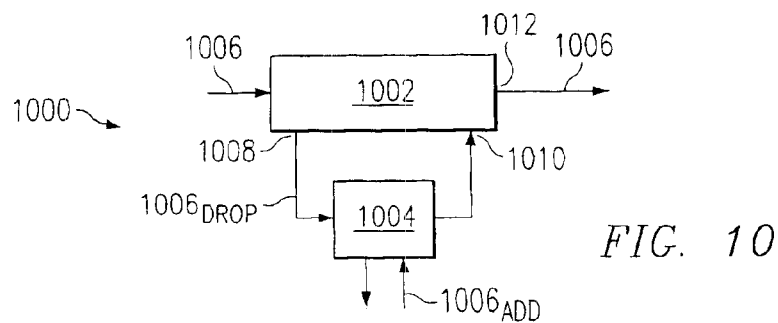
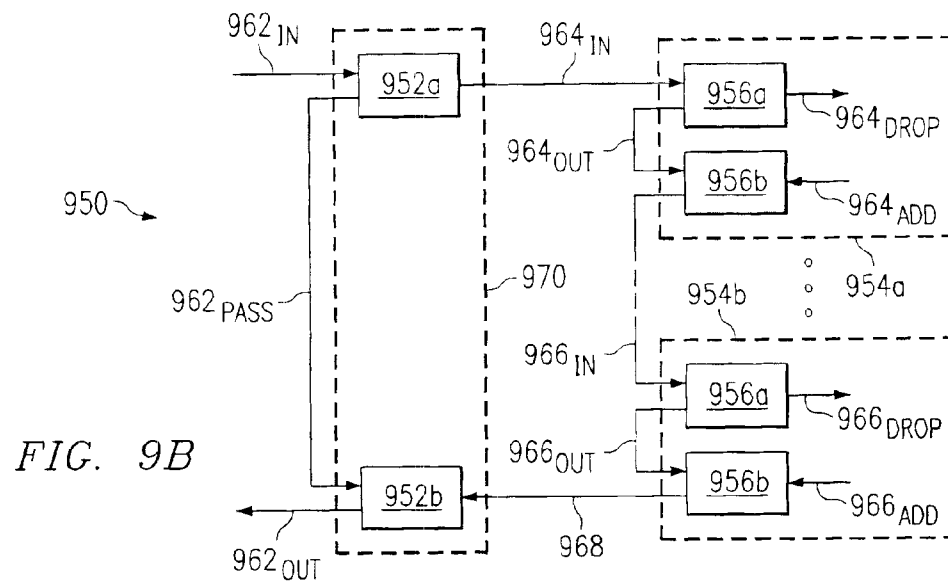
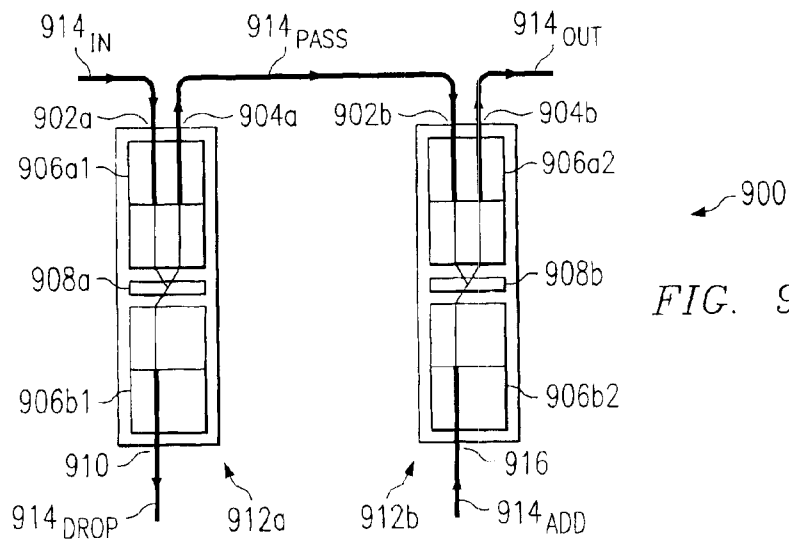
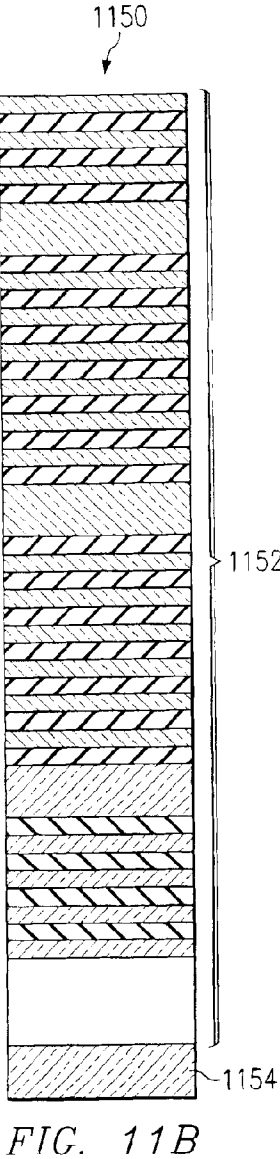
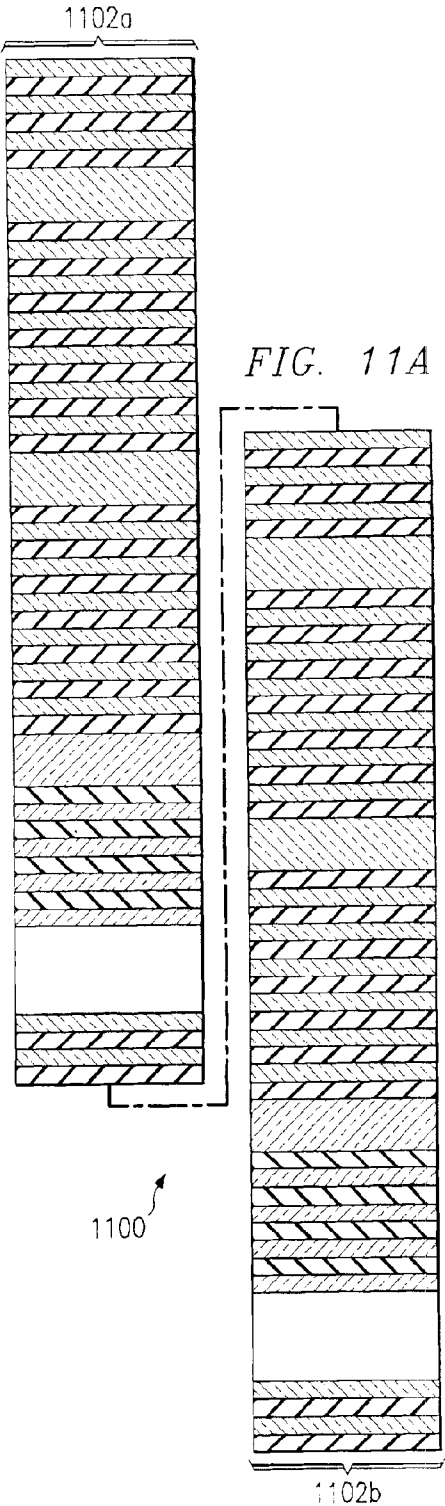


FIG. 8B



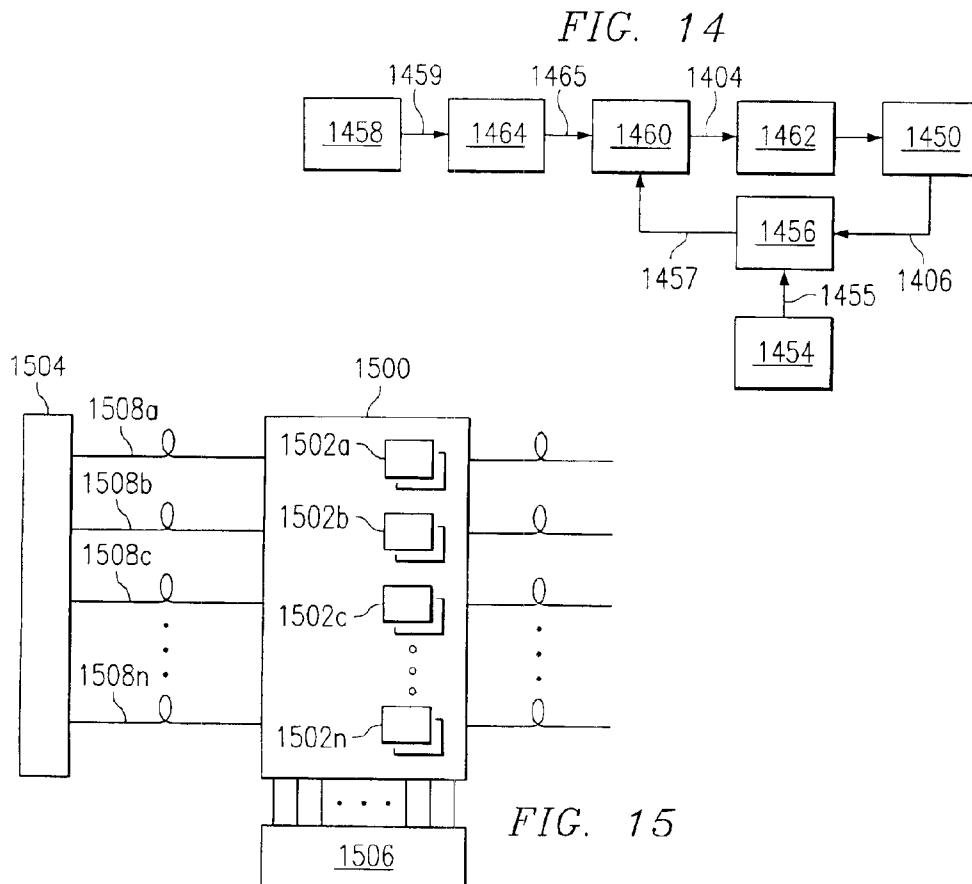
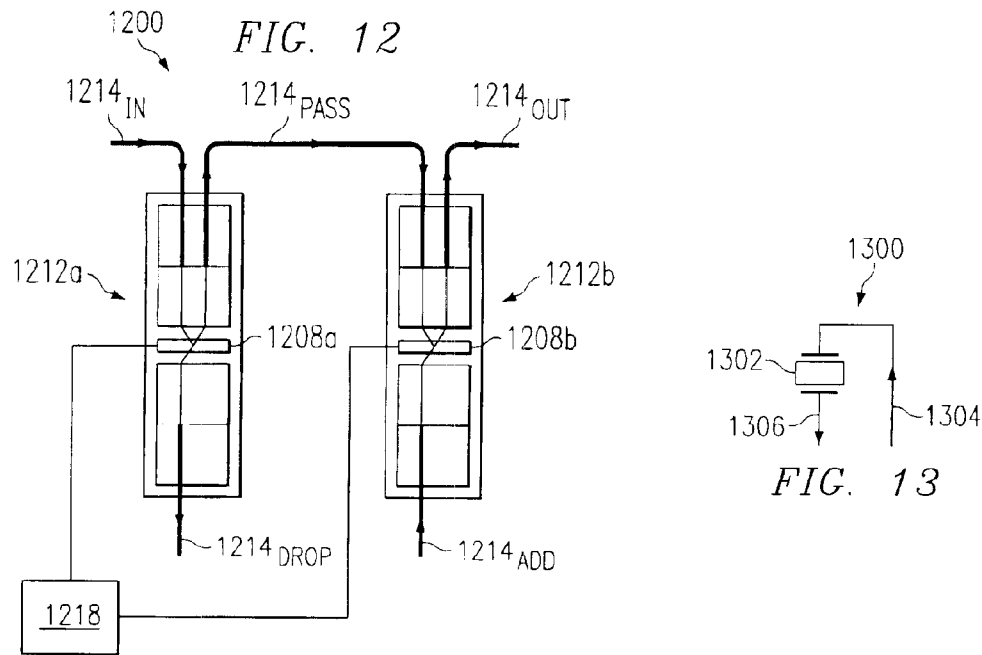


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SQUARE FILTER FUNCTION TUNABLE OPTICAL DEVICES

TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates in general to the field of communications systems and, more specifically, to optical processing devices and applications thereof.

OVERVIEW

Tunable optical devices communicate desired wavelengths of light by selectively changing the response of the device to the wavelength selected for communication. Fabrication of conventional tunable optical devices typically results in a device with a response that comprises a relatively slow frequency roll-off, which can lead to degradation of wavelength signals adjacent to the desired wavelength. Moreover, conventional tunable optical devices employing electro-optic materials often result in devices with severe polarization dependence.

SUMMARY OF EXAMPLE EMBODIMENTS

The present invention provides an improved apparatus and method for selectively communicating optical signals and provides several novel applications for tunable optical devices. In accordance with the present invention, an apparatus and method for communicating optical signals using electro-optic materials are provided that reduce or eliminate at least some of the shortcomings associated with prior approaches.

In one embodiment, a tunable optical device comprises a thin film device. The thin film device comprises a plurality of cavities each comprising an electro-optic material. The plurality of cavities comprise a sufficient number of cavities to result in an approximately square frequency response for the device. The electro-optic material comprises an optical characteristic capable of being manipulated by application of an electric field. In one embodiment, at least some of the plurality of cavities are coherently coupled to others of the plurality of cavities.

In another embodiment, a method of manufacturing a tunable optical device comprises forming a first reflective stack outwardly from a matching layer. The method also comprises depositing an electro-optic layer outwardly from the first reflective stack. The method further comprises crystallizing the electro-optic layer to induce a substantially crystalline like behavior in the electro-optic layer. The method also comprises forming a second reflective stack outwardly from the electro-optic layer.

In yet another embodiment, a tunable optical device comprises a thin film device. The thin film device comprises at least one cavity comprising an electro-optic material. The electro-optic material comprises an optical characteristic capable of being manipulated by application of an electric field. In this embodiment, at least a portion of a multiple wavelength optical signal incident on the thin film device is transmitted through the at least one cavity, and at least a portion of the optical signal is reflected from the thin film device. The determination of the transmitted and reflected signal portions based at least in part on the electric field applied to the electro-optic material residing in each cavity. In this embodiment, the thin film device substantially achieves polarization independence.

In still another embodiment, a tunable optical device comprises a thin film device. The thin film device comprises

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at least one cavity comprising an electro-optic material. The electro-optic material comprises an optical characteristic capable of being manipulated by application of an electric field. In this embodiment, at least a portion of a multiple wavelength optical signal incident on the thin film device is transmitted through the at least one cavity, and at least a portion of the optical signal is reflected from the thin film device. The determination of the transmitted and reflected signal portions based at least in part on the electric field applied to the electro-optic material residing in each cavity. In this embodiment, the thin film device substantially reduces a ripple penalty associated with the at least a portion of the multiple wavelength signal that travels through the at least one optical cavity.

In still another embodiment, a method of selectively communicating an optical signal from a tunable optical device, comprises receiving a multiple wavelength signal at a thin film device comprising a plurality of cavities each comprising an electro-optic material. The plurality of cavities comprises a sufficient number of cavities to result in an approximately square frequency response for the device. The method also comprises manipulating an optical characteristic associated with the electro-optic material by application of an electric field to the thin film device. The method further comprises selectively communicating one or more wavelengths of the multiple wavelength signal based at least in part on the applied electric field. In this embodiment, at least some of the plurality of cavities are coherently coupled to others of the plurality of cavities.

In another embodiment, an optical add/drop multiplexer (OADM) comprises a tunable optical filter operable to selectively drop at least one band of wavelengths from a multiple wavelength signal received by the tunable optical filter. The OADM further comprises a switch coupled to a drop port of the tunable optical filter and an add port of the tunable optical filter. In this embodiment, the switch operates to communicate to the add port a wavelength signal received from the drop port during tuning operations of the optical filter.

In yet another embodiment, a method of selectively adding/dropping an optical signal from an optical add/drop multiplexer comprises tuning an optical characteristic associated with a tunable filter by application of an electric field to the tunable filter. The method further comprises receiving a multiple wavelength signal comprising a plurality of bands of wavelength signals at a tunable filter. The method also comprises selectively dropping at least one band of wavelength signals from the multiple wavelength signal received by the tunable filter. The method further comprises communicating to an add port of the tunable filter a wavelength signal received from a drop port of the tunable filter during tuning operations of the tunable filter.

In still another embodiment, a surface normal modulator comprises a tunable optical filter having a filter response. The filter response is operable to substantially pass one or more wavelengths residing spectrally within a pass band of the filter and to substantially block wavelengths outside of the pass band. The surface normal modulator also comprises a controller operable to generate a control signal for communication to the tunable optical filter. The tunable optical filter is operable to modulate information onto a received optical signal by selectively changing, based at least in part on the control signal, a single-pass optical path of a cavity of the tunable optical filter resulting in a corresponding phase shift of less than $\pi/2$ for at least one wavelength. In other embodiments, the tunable optical filter comprises a contrast ratio of at least five (5) decibels. In some

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embodiments, the tunable optical filter and the controller are co-located on a substrate. In other embodiments, the tunable optical filter modulates digital information onto the received optical signal at a rate of 9.5 gigabits per second or more.

In a method embodiment, a method of modulating digital information onto an optical signal comprises receiving an optical signal at a tunable optical filter. The tunable optical filter comprises a filter response operable to substantially pass one or more wavelengths residing spectrally within a pass band of the filter and to substantially block wavelengths outside of the pass band. The method further comprises generating a control signal for communication to the tunable optical filter. The method also comprises modulating information onto the received optical signal by selectively shifting in frequency a pass band based at least in part on the control signal. In one particular embodiment, the tunable optical filter comprises an approximately square frequency response. In addition, the tunable optical filter comprises a contrast ratio of at least five (5) decibels.

In another method embodiment, a method of modulating digital information onto an optical signal comprises generating a plurality of substantially different wavelengths of light. The method also comprises forming an optical signal by selecting one or more specific wavelengths of light from the plurality of different wavelengths of light. The method further comprises receiving the optical signal at a tunable optical filter. The method also comprises modulating information onto the received optical signal by selectively shifting in frequency a pass band of the tunable optical filter. In one particular embodiment, the tunable optical filter comprises an approximately square frequency response. In addition, the tunable optical filter comprises a contrast ratio of at least five (5) decibels.

Depending on the specific features implemented, particular embodiments of the present invention may exhibit some, none, or all of the following technical advantages. Various embodiments enable the formation of a flat-top or square-like device function, which can reduce the signal degradation in signals adjacent to the desired wavelength signal. Some embodiments may, implement a polarization independent configuration, which may substantially prevent an electric field from influencing either of a pair of approximately orthogonally polarized beam components forming the optical signal. Other embodiments may be capable of selectively communicating a desired wavelength or range of wavelengths while minimizing a ripple penalty within the selectively communicated wavelength or range of wavelengths.

Other technical advantages will be readily apparent to one skilled in the art from the following figures, descriptions and claims. Moreover, while specific advantages have been enumerated above, various embodiments may include all, some or none of the enumerated advantages.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a more complete understanding of the present invention, and for further features and advantages thereof, reference is now made to the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating one example of a tunable multiple-cavity optical device;

FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating one example of a tunable multiple-cavity optical device configured in a transverse configuration;

FIG. 3 is a block diagram showing a pair of transversely configured tunable multiple-cavity optical devices implementing a polarization diversity technique;

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FIG. 4 is a graph showing one example of transmission spectra of a tunable multiple-cavity optical device;

FIG. 5 is a graph showing a transmission spectrum of a wide band tunable multiple-cavity optical device;

FIGS. 6A THROUGH 6G are cross-sectional views showing one example of a method of forming a portion of one embodiment of a tunable multiple-cavity optical device;

FIG. 7 shows a plan view of a traverse configuration of a tunable multiple-cavity optical device after the formation of at least a pair of conductors;

FIGS. 8A and 8B are block diagrams illustrating exemplary embodiments of optical add/drop multiplexers (OADM) incorporating an optical filter;

FIGS. 9A and 9B are block diagrams illustrating exemplary embodiments of optical add/drop multiplexers (OADM) incorporating an optical filter;

FIG. 10 is a block diagram of a non-blocking tunable device;

FIGS. 11A and 11B are block diagrams illustrating exemplary embodiments of non-blocking electro-optic tunable devices;

FIG. 12 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary embodiment of a tunable non-blocking OADM implementing a serial combination of non-blocking tunable optical devices;

FIG. 13 is a block diagram of one exemplary embodiment of an electro-optic voltage variable capacitor;

FIG. 14 is a block diagram of one exemplary embodiment of a digital feedback control system; and

FIG. 15 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary embodiment of a surface normal modulator.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EXAMPLE EMBODIMENTS

1. Tunable Multiple Cavity Device

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating one example of a tunable multiple-cavity optical device 100. In this example, device 100 includes a plurality of adjacent fundamental stacks 112a-112n each operable to selectively communicate all or a portion of a desired wavelength or range of wavelengths of light. In this example, each fundamental stack 112 comprises a pair of reflective stacks 102 and 104. Each reflective stack 102, 104 comprises a partially transmitting dielectric mirror having alternating layers of higher index dielectric materials and lower index dielectric materials. Each pair of alternating layers of dielectric materials forms a fundamental period within each reflective stack 102, 104. The number of fundamental periods within each reflective stack depends at least in part on the desired reflectivity of device 100 and can be selected as a matter of design choice.

Each fundamental stack 112 further comprises an optical cavity 106 formed between reflective stack 102 and reflective stack 104. As used throughout this document the term "optical cavity" refers merely to the stratum between reflective stacks, which may comprise a dielectric material, another material, a gas, or a combination of a dielectric material, other materials, and/or a gas. Optical cavity 106 may comprise any dielectric material capable of selectively communicating all or a portion of a desired wavelength of light depending at least in part on an electric field applied to the material.

Multi-cavity device 100 selectively communicates all or a portion of a desired optical signal by applying an electric field to the dielectric material contained within each optical cavity 106. One aspect of this disclosure recognizes that

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applying an electric field to the dielectric material causes a change in one or more optical characteristics of the material, thus selectively changing the wavelength signal transmitted through device **100**. Changing the polarization property of a liquid crystal material or manipulating the index of refraction of an electro-optic material are just a few examples of the optical characteristics that the electric field can change.

In this particular embodiment, at least one of the plurality of optical cavities **106** comprises an electro-optic material with an index of refraction that is capable of being manipulated through the application of an electric field to the electro-optic material. Changing the index of refraction of the electro-optic material has the effect of modifying the effective optical cavity length. As used throughout this document, the term “effective optical cavity length” refers to the optical path length of the optical cavity. The optical path length and/or the effective optical cavity length (L_{oc}) can be determined by multiplying the index of refraction (n) of the electro-optic material by the thickness (t) of the electro-optic material. In equation form, this relationship is:

$$L_{oc}=nxt$$

Modifying the effective optical cavity length has the effect of selectively changing the optical signal communicated from device **100**. Lithium niobate, lithium tantalate, strontium barium niobate, and lanthanum modified lead zirconate titanate provide a few examples of suitable electro-optic materials.

In this particular embodiment, fundamental stack **112** also includes a pair of electrodes **108**, **110** each coupled between optical cavity **106** and reflective stacks **102**, **104**, respectively. Each electrode **108**, **110** is capable of at least partially inducing an electric field within device **100**. Although in this example a pair of electrodes **108**, **110** surround each optical cavity **106**, other electrode configurations can be implemented without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. For example, where each optical cavity **106** comprises an electro-optic material with a substantially similar cavity length, a single pair of electrodes may be utilized to change the index of refraction for the plurality of optical cavities **106**. In that example, electrode **108** can be coupled to reflective stack **102a**, while electrode **110** can be coupled to reflective stack **104n**. Each electrode **108** and **110** may comprise any at least partially transparent material such as, for example, doped polysilicon or indium tin oxide.

In the illustrated embodiment, multiple-cavity device **100** further comprises a plurality of transition layers **114**, each residing between adjacent pairs of fundamental stacks **112**. Each transition layer **114** operates to couple fundamental stacks **112** in a manner that produces an approximately flat-top or square-like response. The material used to form transition layer **114** can be selected to have a desired index of refraction that contrasts with the indices of refraction of other materials used to form fundamental stacks **112**. The index of refraction of transition layer **114** operates to form a contrast between the last dielectric layer of reflective stack **104** and the first dielectric layer of reflective stack **102**. For example, where the last dielectric layer of reflective stack **104a** comprises a higher index dielectric material and the first dielectric layer of reflective stack **102b** also comprises a higher index dielectric material, transition layer **114** can comprise a lower index dielectric material.

Multiple-cavity device **100** can operate in transmission or reflection mode. That is, device **100** can operate to transmit selected wavelengths while reflecting others, or can operate to reflect selected wavelengths while transmitting others. For ease of description, the following discussion assumes

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that device **100** operates in transmission mode; transmitting a selected wavelength or range of wavelengths, while reflecting others.

The range of wavelengths selected for transmission through device **100** depends, at least in part, on the number of alternating layers of higher and lower index dielectric materials in each reflective stack **102**, **104**. The greater the number of alternating layers, the higher the reflectivity of fundamental stack **112**, and the more narrow the band-width of the selected pass-through signal. Using a sufficient number of alternating layers in each reflective stack **102**, **104** can result in selecting a single wavelength signal **115_{DROP}** from a multiple wavelength signal **116** received by device **100**.

Conversely, a wider range of wavelengths can be selected for transmission through device **100** by decreasing the number of alternating layers in each reflective stack **102**, **104**. Simply decreasing the number of alternating layers in each reflective stack **102**, **104**, while maintaining the same number of reflective stacks **102**, **104**, however, typically results in a slower frequency roll-off for device **100**. This slower frequency roll-off can lead to degradation of wavelength signals adjacent to the selected pass-through signal or signals of device **100**. Adjacent signal degradation can be reduced by increasing the number of fundamental stacks **112** (and thus increasing the number of reflective stacks **102**, **104**) in device **100**. Increasing the number of fundamental stacks **112** makes the side-band roll-off of device **100** steeper, thus reducing degradation of wavelength signals adjacent to the pass-band, while increasing the number of wavelengths selected for transmission through device **100**.

Conventional tunable multiple-cavity communication devices utilizing electro-optic materials can result in a response that comprises a Lorentzian shape, which comprises a relatively slow frequency roll-off and leads to degradation of wavelength signals adjacent to the pass-band. One aspect of this disclosure recognizes that increasing the number of fundamental stacks **112**, while maintaining the same number of alternating layers in each reflective stack **102**, **104** can form a substantially flat-top or “square-like” filter function as a function of frequency. As used in this document, the terms “flat-top” and “square-like” refer to a device response that is substantially flat over the selected pass-band wavelengths. The square-like response is advantageous in providing a slightly wider pass-through bandwidth. The square-like response can also provide a steeper side-band roll-off that has the effect of reducing the degradation of wavelengths adjacent to the pass-through signal or signals. In addition, further increasing the number of fundamental stacks **112** has the effect of widening the pass-through signal bandwidth, which enables device **100** to pass-through a wider range of wavelengths for transmission through device **100**.

In the illustrated embodiment, device **100** is capable of creating a substantially square-like response. The square-like response operates to minimize distortion of the pass-through signals, to reduce cross-talk between adjacent channels, and to minimize the stability requirement of the light sources. In various embodiments, the square-like response can comprise a -1 decibel bandwidth of at least 12.5 giga-hertz, 20 giga-Hertz, 25 giga-Hertz or more. In other embodiments, the square-like response can comprise a -30 decibel bandwidth of at least 500 giga-Hertz, 250 giga-Hertz, 200 giga-Hertz or less.

In the illustrated embodiment, multiple-cavity device **100** operates in a longitudinal configuration. As used in this document the term “longitudinal configuration” refers to a configuration of device **100** where multiple wavelength

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signal **116** is propagated parallel to the direction of an electric field generated by electrodes **108**, **110**. In this example, each optical cavity **106** comprises an electro-optic material that has a relatively high electro-optic coefficient. A relatively high electro-optic coefficient enables the applica-

In one particular embodiment, longitudinally configured multiple-cavity device **100** is capable of substantially maintaining polarization independence. As used in this document, the term “polarization independence” refers to a device where the effect of the device on light polarized in one plane is substantially similar to its effect on light polarized in the orthogonal plane. In various embodiments, device **100** is capable of achieving a polarization dependent loss of two (2) decibels or less, one (1) decibel or less, or one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) decibel or less. In this embodiment, the electro-optic material contained within each optical, cavity **106** comprises a crystalline structure that has a crystal symmetry where the crystal axis is substantially parallel to the direction of propagation of multiple wavelength signal **116**. As used throughout this document, the term “crystal axis” refers to the optic axis of the crystalline structure comprising the longest crystal lattice.

One aspect of this disclosure recognizes that, at least in a uniaxial longitudinally configured device, applying the electric field parallel to both a crystal axis and the direction of propagation of multiple wavelength signal **116** results in a substantially polarization independent device. That is, where a crystal axis, the electric field, and the direction of propagation of signal **116** are parallel to one another, device **100** does not substantially interact with the orthogonally polarized optical beam components, thus substantially maintaining polarization independence. In one particular embodiment, the electro-optic material contained within each optical cavity **106** maintains its uniaxial property when a voltage is applied. In some embodiments, the electro-optic material comprises a crystal class having a uniaxial property that remains substantially uniaxial upon the application of an electric field. For example, the electro-optic material may comprise any electro-optic material contained within the 4, 4 mm, 3 m, 6, or 6 m crystal classes.

FIG. **2** is a block diagram of one example of a multiple-cavity device **200** configured in a transverse configuration. As used in this document the term “transverse configuration” refers to a configuration of multiple-cavity device **200** where an electric field associated with device **200** is applied perpendicular to the direction of propagation of multiple wavelength signal **216** received by device **200**. In this example, multiple-cavity device **200** comprises a plurality of adjacent fundamental stacks **212a-212n**. The structure and function of fundamental stacks **212** can be substantially similar to fundamental stacks **112** of FIG. **1**. In this particular embodiment, each fundamental stack **212** includes an optical cavity **206** containing an electro-optic material comprising a crystalline structure with a high electro-optic coefficient.

Multiple-cavity device **200** further includes a plurality of transition layers **214** residing between pairs of fundamental stacks **212**. The structure and function of transition layer **214** can be substantially similar to transition-layer **114** of FIG. **1**.

In the illustrated example, device **200** also includes a pair of at least partially transparent electrodes **208** and **210** capable of generating an electric field applied substantially perpendicular to the direction of propagation of multiple wavelength signal **216**. The electric field generated by electrodes **208** and **210** is capable of changing the index of

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refraction of the electro-optic material contained within each optical cavity **206**. In this example, the electro-optic material comprises a crystalline structure whose crystal axis is parallel to the electric field generated within device **200**. The magnitude of the electro-optic response depends, at least in part, on the direction in which the electric field is applied relative to the crystal axis of the electro-optic material. Applying the electric field parallel to the crystal axis of the electro-optic material is advantageous in providing the maximum electro-optic response. Although this example uses two electrodes to generate the electric field, any number of pairs of electrodes may be used without departing from the scope of the present invention.

One aspect of this disclosure recognizes a shortcoming associated with conventional multiple-cavity communication devices utilizing electro-optic materials. In particular, conventional electro-optic devices configured in a transverse configuration typically result in severe polarization dependence. A polarization dependent multiple-cavity device results because the electric field generated within the multiple-cavity device is substantially parallel to the polarization axis of one of the pair of approximately orthogonally polarized optical beam components. This typically results in a transmission of one state of polarization different from the other.

Unlike conventional multiple-cavity devices, this embodiment of multiple-cavity device **200** implements a polarization diversity technique that substantially prevents or at least reduces polarization dependence. As used in this document the term “polarization diversity technique” refers to a technique that separates the optical signal into a pair of individual beam components that are usually orthogonally polarized and processes each individual beam component separately. Implementing a polarization diversity technique provides the advantage of allowing the electric field to be applied parallel to the polarization axis of each beam component, thus creating a device that has less polarization dependence.

A polarization diversity technique implemented in a transverse configuration also enables the electro-optic material to provide a higher tuning range than a, similarly configured device in a longitudinal configuration. The improved tuning range is a result of the transverse configuration geometry enabling a larger change in the refractive index of the electro-optic material with the application of substantially similar electric fields.

FIG. **3** is a block diagram showing a pair of transversely configured multiple-cavity devices **350** implementing a polarization diversity technique **300**. In this example, polarization diversity technique **300**, includes at least a polarization beam splitter **320a** and a polarization beam combiner **320n**. Although this example shows one beam splitter **320a** and one combiner **320n**, any number of additional beam splitters, combiners, and/or polarization manipulating components could be used without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. Polarization beam splitter **320a** operates to receive multiple wavelength signal **316** and to spatially separate signal **316** into two approximately orthogonally polarized beams **322** and **324**. Polarization beam combiner **320n** operates to receive two approximately orthogonally polarized beams **322_{DROP}** and **324_{DROP}**, and to combine those beam components into signal **315_{DROP}**. Although polarization beam splitters are used in this particular example, other devices with similar functionality, such as birefringent elements or power dividers, can be used without departing from the scope of the present disclosure.

In the illustrated example, scheme **300** also includes at least a first transversely configured multiple-cavity device

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350a and a second transversely configured multiple-cavity device **350b**. Although this example shows two devices **350a** and **350b**, any number of additional multiple-cavity devices could be used without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. Device **350a** operates to receive first polarized beam **322** and to selectively transmit first polarized beam **322_{DROP}**. In a similar manner, second device **350b** operates to receive a second polarized beam **324** and to selectively transmit second polarized beam **324_{DROP}**. The structure and function of transversely configured multiple-cavity devices **350a** and **350b** can be substantially similar to transversely configured multiple-cavity device **200** of FIG. 2.

In operation, multiple wavelength signal **316** is spatially separated by polarization beam splitter **320a** into two approximately orthogonally polarized multiple wavelength signal beams **322** and **324**. Each beam **322**, **324** is received by multiple-cavity device **350a**, **350b** respectively. Each multiple-cavity device **350a**, **350b** implements a transverse configuration. That is, the electric field generated within each device **350a** and **350b** is applied parallel to the polarization axis of the respective beam component within beams **322** and **324**. For example, if beam **322** comprises a vertical polarization axis, the electric field applied by electrodes **308** and **310** of device **350a** will be applied in the vertical direction, thus providing a substantial change in the refractive index with the applied field. The vertical beam **322_{DROP}** is combined with the horizontally polarized beam **324_{DROP}** to form beam **315_{DROP}**.

FIG. 4 is a graph showing one example of transmission spectra of a tunable multiple-cavity optical device. In this example, line **402** represents a first response of device **400** before the application of the electric field. Line **410** represents the resulting second response after the application of the electric field within device **400**. In this example, first response **402** and second response **410** each comprise a flat-top or square-like response.

In this particular embodiment, multiple-cavity device **400** includes three fundamental stacks each comprising a pair of reflective stacks and an optical cavity. Each optical cavity comprises an electro-optic material with a thickness of approximately 100 nanometers. Multiple-cavity device **400** further includes a plurality of transition layers residing between pairs of fundamental stacks. Device **400** also includes at least a pair of electrodes capable of inducing an electric field within device **400**.

In this example, the electrodes of multiple-cavity device **400** are capable of inducing an electric field that causes a change in the optical characteristics of the electro-optic materials. In one particular embodiment, a voltage source capable of generating a voltage differential of at least 10 volts operates to induce the electric field within device **400**. In that embodiment, the voltage source induces an electric field that changes the index of refraction of the electro-optic material and selectively communicates the desired wavelength through device **400**. The changes in the index of refraction of the electro-optic material creates an effective tuning range of approximately 10 nanometers. That is, applying a voltage source of at least 10 volts to the electrodes of device **400** causes the index of refraction to change, which enables the communication of a 10 nanometer range of wavelengths.

As shown in this figure, response **402** is capable of transmitting the 1550 nanometer wavelength optical signal from multi-cavity device **400** prior to the application of an electric field to device **400**. Upon generating an electric field the indices of refraction of the electro-optic materials within

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the optical cavities change, resulting in a change in a wavelength of the optical, signal transmitted through device **400**. The resulting response **410** comprises a response substantially similar to first response **402**, but is capable of transmitting the 1551 nanometer optical signal from device **400**.

FIG. 5 is a graph showing a transmission spectrum of a wide band tunable multiple-cavity optical device. In this example, multiple-cavity device **500** includes eight fundamental stacks each comprising a pair of reflective stacks, and an optical cavity. Each optical cavity comprises an electro-optic material with a thickness of approximately 100 nanometers. Multiple-cavity device **500** further includes a plurality of transition layers residing between adjacent pairs of fundamental stacks. Device **500** also includes at least a pair of electrodes capable of inducing an electric field within device **500**.

In this example, line **502** represents the response of device **500**. Response **502** comprises a flat-top or square-like response capable of transmitting a band of wavelengths including the 1550–1556 nanometer optical signals. In an alternative embodiment, device **500** is capable of selectively changing the band of wavelengths transmitted through device **500**. In that embodiment, the electric field generated within device **500** can cause a change in the index of refraction of the electro-optic materials, thus shifting filter function **502** and causing device **500** to communicate a different band of wavelength signals. That is, applying or changing the electric field of device **500** will shift response **502** and cause, for example, device **500** to pass the 1556–1562 nanometer wavelength band. The electric field can be generated in a substantially similar manner as the electric field generated in FIG. 4.

FIGS. 6A through 6G are cross-sectional views showing one example of a method of forming a portion of one embodiment of a multiple-cavity device **600**. Multiple-cavity device **600** may be used as a basis for forming an optical add/drop multiplexer, a multiplexer, a demultiplexer, an optical noise suppressor, a router, a modulator, a switch, or a channel filter. Particular examples and dimensions specified throughout this document are intended for exemplary purposes only, and are not intended to limit the scope of the invention. Moreover, the illustration in FIGS. 6A–6G are not intended to be to scale.

FIG. 6A shows a cross-sectional view of device **600** after formation of an anti-reflective coating **604** inwardly from substrate **602**, a matching layer **610** outwardly from substrate **602**, and a first conductive layer **616** outwardly from matching layer **610**. Substrate **602** may comprise any at least partially transmissive material, such as, for example, silicon, sapphire, or glass. Anti-reflective coating **604** may comprise a single layer or a plurality of layers of alternating layer materials. In this example, anti-reflective coating **604** comprises a plurality of alternating layers of a first anti-reflective layer **606** and a second anti-reflective layer **608**. Each anti-reflective layer **606**, **608** may comprise a single material or combination of materials such as silicon, silicon dioxide, or titanium dioxide. In this particular example, first anti-reflective layer **606** comprises titanium dioxide and second anti-reflective layer **608** comprises silicon dioxide.

Forming anti-reflective coating **604** may be effected through any of a variety of processes. For example, anti-reflective coating **604** may be formed by alternately depositing first anti-reflective layer **606** and second anti-reflective layer **608**. In this particular example, anti-reflective coating **604** comprises a thickness of approximately 638 nanometers.

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Matching layer **610** may comprise a single layer or a plurality of layers of layer materials. In this example, matching layer **610** comprises a first layer material **612** and a second layer material **614**. First layer material **612** and second layer material **614** may comprise, for example, silicon, silicon dioxide, or titanium dioxide. In this particular example, first layer material **612** comprises titanium dioxide with a thickness of approximately 28 nanometers, while second layer material **614** comprises silicon dioxide with a thickness of approximately 73 nanometers. Forming matching layer **610** may be effected, for example, by alternately depositing first layer material **612** and second layer material **614**.

First conductive layer **616** may comprise any at least partially transparent material capable of supporting at least a portion of a voltage differential. For example, conductive layer **616** may comprise one or more layers of doped polysilicon or indium tin oxide. In this particular embodiment, first conductive layer **616** comprises a doped polysilicon with a thickness of approximately 216 nanometers.

Forming first conductive layer **616** may be effected through any of a variety of processes. For example, first conductive layer **616** may be formed by depositing a conductive material outwardly from matching layer **610**.

FIG. 6B shows a cross-sectional view of device **600** after formation of a first reflective stack **622** outwardly from first conductive layer **616**. Reflective stack **622** may comprise a single layer or a plurality of layers of alternating layer materials. In this example, reflective stack **622** comprises a plurality of alternating layers of a first material **618** and a second material **620**. First material **618** and second material **620** may comprise, for example, silicon, silicon dioxide, or titanium dioxide. In many embodiments, it is advantageous if first material **618** and second material **620** have a large difference in their refractive indices. In this particular example, first material **618** comprises titanium dioxide and second material **620** comprises silicon dioxide.

Forming first reflective stack **622** may be effected through any of a variety of processes. For example, first reflective stack **622** may be formed by alternately depositing first material **618** and second material **620**.

The thickness of each of the plurality of layer materials **618**, **620** depends at least in part on the nominal desired wavelength (λ_{ref}) to be communicated and on the index of refraction (n) of the layer materials. As device **600** will be a tunable optical device and will operate to selectively pass various wavelength signals, it is generally desirable to design the device assuming transmission of a "nominal wavelength." The nominal wavelength can be selected as a matter of design choice.

One possible design choice is to select a nominal wavelength in the middle of the range of wavelengths that might potentially be passed by device **600**. Determining the thickness of each of the plurality of layer materials **618**, **620** may be achieved by approximately:

$$\lambda_{ref} + 4n$$

In this particular embodiment, the thickness of first material **618** comprises approximately 142 nanometers and the thickness of second material **620** comprises approximately 268 nanometers. In that embodiment, the desired nominal wavelength comprises approximately 1550 nanometers and the total thickness of reflective stack **622** comprises approximately 2 microns.

Combining each first material **618** and second material **620** forms a period within first reflective stack **622**. The

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number of periods within reflective stack **622** depends at least in part on the desired reflectivity of device **600**. In this particular embodiment, reflective stack **622** comprises 5 periods. Although reflective stack **622** comprises 5 periods in this example, reflective stack **622** could comprise another number of periods without departing from the scope of the present invention.

FIG. 6C shows a cross-sectional view of device **600** after formation of a first optical cavity layer **624**. First optical cavity layer **624** may comprise any material with a relatively high electro-optic coefficient. Lithium niobate, lithium tantalate, strontium barium niobate, and lanthanum modified lead zirconate titanate provide just a few examples. In this particular embodiment, first optical cavity layer **624** comprises strontium barium niobate. In some embodiments, first optical cavity layer **624** may comprise an electro-optic material with a substantially crystalline structure. For example, the electro-optic material may comprise any electro-optic material contained within the 4, 4 mm, 3 m, 6, or 6 m crystal classes.

Forming first optical cavity layer **624** may be effected through any of a variety of processes. For example, optical cavity layer **624** may be formed by depositing an electro-optic material. In some embodiments, after depositing the electro-optic material, the electro-optic material can be subjected to a crystallization process to achieve a crystalline like behavior in the electro-optic material. As used in this document, the term "crystallization" refers to a process capable of changing a material from a relatively amorphous state to a more structured state. In this particular embodiment, the deposited electro-optic material is immediately subjected to a thermal cycle that induces crystallization and orients a crystal axis. In other embodiments, the electro-optic material may be subjected to a thermal cycle after formation of a reflective stack or a portion of a reflective stack outwardly from electro-optic cavity layer **624**. In still other embodiments, the electro-optic material may be subjected to a thermal cycle after formation of the entire multiple-cavity device **600**. In some embodiments, the crystallization includes an annealing process to relieve stresses formed within the electro-optic material.

In various embodiments, the electro-optic material is subject to a poling process to substantially orient a crystal axis as desired. In one particular embodiment, the poling process may comprise all or a portion of the crystallization process. In other embodiments, the electro-optic material may be subject to poling after completion of the crystallization process.

The thickness of first optical cavity layer **624** depends at least in part on a desired tuning range, a desired maximum operating voltage, and a desired wavelength or wavelengths to be communicated. In this particular embodiment, first optical cavity layer **624** comprises strontium barium niobate with a thickness of approximately one (1) micron. Although first cavity layer comprises three (3) one-half wavelengths optical thickness (normalized for the index of refraction of the material) in this example, any integer multiple of half wavelength optical thickness could be used without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. In this example, nominal wavelength comprises approximately 1550 nanometers.

In this example, first optical cavity layer **624** resides directly outwardly from first reflective stack **622**. Alternatively, one or more buffer layers, or one or more conductive layers, or a combination of buffer layers and conductive layers could reside between first reflective stack **622** and first optical cavity layer **624**. In one alternative

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embodiment, a buffer layer is formed between first reflective stack 622 and first optical cavity layer 624. In addition, another buffer layer is formed outwardly from first optical cavity layer 624. Each buffer layer may comprise, for example, silicon, silicon dioxide, or titanium dioxide.

In another alternative embodiment, a conductive layer could reside between first reflective stack 622 and first optical cavity layer 624. In addition, another conductive layer is formed outwardly from first optical cavity layer 624. The structure and function of each conductive layer can be substantially similar to first conductive layer 616. Placing a pair of conductive layers around first optical cavity layer 624 can be advantageous in a multiple-cavity device where each of the plurality of optical cavity layers comprise a substantially different layer thickness. In this embodiment, first conductive layer 616 does not reside between matching layer 610 and first reflective stack 622.

FIG. 6D shows a cross-sectional view of device 600 after formation of a second reflective stack 626. The structure and function of second reflective stack 626 can be substantially similar to first reflective stack 622. In this particular embodiment, second reflective stack 626 and first reflective stack 622 each comprise an equal number of periods of similar layer materials and an approximately equal reflective stack thickness.

Forming second reflective stack 626 may be effected through any of a variety of processes. For example, second reflective stack 626 can be formed by depositing a plurality of layer materials outwardly from first optical cavity layer 624. In this particular embodiment, second reflective stack 626 may be formed by alternately depositing second material 620 and first material 618. As shown in this figure, the combination of first reflective stack 622, first optical cavity layer 624, and second reflective stack 626 form a first fundamental stack 628.

FIG. 6E shows a cross sectional view of device 600 after formation of a first transition layer 630 outwardly from first fundamental stack 628. First transition layer 630 may comprise any substantially transparent material capable of coupling first fundamental stack 628 to additional fundamental stacks. It is advantageous if first transition layer 630 and the final layer material, of second reflective stack 626 have a large difference in their refractive indices.

Forming transition layer 630 may be effected through any of a variety of process. For example, transition layer 630 may be formed by depositing a substantially transparent material.

The thickness of transition layer 630 depends at least in part on the desired wavelength to be communicated and the index of refraction of the layer material. In this particular example, transition layer 630 comprises a single quarter wavelength optical thickness (normalized for the index of refraction of the material). Transition layer 114 could, however, comprise any integer multiple of quarter wavelength optical thickness without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. In this particular example, first transition layer 630 comprises silicon dioxide with a thickness of approximately 268 nanometers.

In this example, transition layer 630 resides directly outwardly from first fundamental stack 628. Alternatively, a second conductive layer could reside outwardly from first fundamental stack 628. The structure and function of the second conductive layer, can be substantially similar to first conductive layer 616. In that embodiment, device 600 would comprise a single cavity device, without transition layer 630.

FIG. 6F shows a cross-sectional view of device 600 after formation of a second fundamental stack 632 outwardly

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from first transition layer 630. The structure and function of second fundamental stack 632, can be substantially similar to first fundamental stack 628. In this particular embodiment, first fundamental stack 628 and second fundamental stack 632 each comprise a first reflective stack 622 and a second reflective stack 626. Each reflective stack 622 and 626 comprises an equal number of periods of similar layer materials and an approximately equal stack thickness. In addition, first fundamental stack 628 and second fundamental stack 632 each comprise an optical cavity layer 624 with a similar material and an approximately equal cavity layer, thickness.

In this example, each optical cavity layer 624 comprises an approximately equal cavity layer thickness. Alternatively, one or more of the optical cavity layers may each comprise a different layer thickness. In that embodiment, a pair of conductive layers reside around each optical cavity layer.

FIG. 6G shows a cross-sectional view of device 600 after formation of a second transition layer 634 outwardly from fundamental stack 632, a third fundamental stack 636 outwardly from transition layer 634, and a second conductive layer 638 outwardly from third fundamental stack 636. The structure and function of second transition layer 634, can be substantially similar to first transition layer 630. In this particular embodiment, first transition layer 630 and second transition layer 634 each comprise a substantially similar layer material and an approximately equal thickness.

The structure and function of third fundamental stack 636 can be substantially similar to first fundamental stack 628. In this particular embodiment, first fundamental stack 628 and third fundamental stack 636 each comprise a first reflective stack 622 and a second reflective stack 626. Each reflective stack 622, 626 comprises an equal number of periods of similar layer materials and an approximately equal stack thickness. In addition, first fundamental stack 628 and third fundamental stack 636 each comprise an optical cavity layer with a substantially similar layer material and an approximately equal cavity thickness.

The structure and function of second conductive layer 638 can be substantially similar to first conductive layer 616. In this particular embodiment, first conductive layer 616 and second conductive layer 638 each comprises a similar layer material and an approximately equal layer thickness.

In this example, second conductive layer 638 resides directly outwardly from third fundamental stack 636 without any additional layers disposed between them. Alternatively, one or more additional layers could reside between second conductive layer 638 and third fundamental stack 636 to substantially control pass-band ripple. For example, in a three cavity design, either a higher or a lower index of refraction dielectric material comprising a one-quarter wavelength optical thickness of the desired nominal wavelength (normalized by the index of refraction for that material) may be formed outwardly from third fundamental stack 636. It is advantageous if the last layer material of third fundamental stack 636 and the additional layer have a large difference in their refractive indices. In one particular embodiment, an additional layer comprising silicon dioxide with a thickness of approximately 268 nanometers is deposited to control pass-band ripple. In various embodiments, the additional layer operates to control the ripple penalty; to approximately three (3) decibels or less, two (2) decibels or less, or one (1) decibel or less.

In the illustrated embodiment, multiple-cavity device 600 includes three fundamental stacks each separated by a transition layer. Although this example has three fundamental stacks each separated by a transition layer, any number of

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additional fundamental stacks and transition layers may be used without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. In one particular embodiment, multiple-cavity device **600** includes eight fundamental stacks deposited between first conductive layer **616** and second conductive layer **638**. In that embodiment, each fundamental stack is separated by a transition layer.

In the illustrated embodiment, first conductive layer **616** and second conductive layer **638** support an electric field parallel to the direction of propagation of a multiple wavelength signal. Alternatively, the conductive layers could be formed to induce an electric field that is substantially perpendicular to the direction of propagation of the multiple wavelength signal. In that embodiment, first fundamental stack **628**, can be formed outwardly from matching layer **610** and a single conductive layer can be formed outwardly from third fundamental stack **636**. After the formation of the conductive layer, the conductive layer can be patterned and etched to form at least a pair of conductors.

FIG. 7 shows a plan view of a transverse multiple-cavity device **700** after the formation of at least a pair of conductors. In this embodiment, conductors **708** and **710** are configured to generate an electric field perpendicular to the direction of propagation of a multiple wavelength signal. To generate an electric field perpendicular to the direction of propagation, a voltage may be applied between electrodes **708a** and **710a** or **708b** and **710b** as desired. The structure and function of conductors **708** and **710** can be substantially similar to conductive layers **616** and **638** of FIG. 6. In this particular embodiment, conductor **708** and conductor **710** each comprise a similar conductive material and an approximately equal conductive material thickness. In this particular example, conductors **708** and **710** may be formed, for example, by patterning and etching the conductive layer using photo resist mask and etch techniques.

2. Optical Add/Drop Multiplexer Architecture

FIGS. 8A and 8B are block diagrams illustrating exemplary embodiments of optical add/drop multiplexers (OADM) incorporating an optical filter **808**. Throughout this disclosure the terms “add/drop,” “adding/dropping,” and “added/dropped” refer to either the operation of adding one or more wavelength signals, dropping one or more wavelength signals, or adding wavelength signals and dropping others. Those terms are not intended to require both add and drop operation, but are also not intended to exclude add and drop operations. The terms are merely used as a convenient way to refer to either adding or dropping or both adding and dropping operations.

In some embodiments, the structure and function of optical filter **808** can be substantially similar to multiple cavity device **100** of FIG. 1. Inventive aspects of the OADM architecture are not, however, limited to the use of multiple cavity thin film filters. Other tunable optical devices could be used. For example, micro electromechanical switching (MEMS) devices or other tunable optical devices could be used.

Optical filter **808** can operate in transmission or reflection mode. That is, filter **808** can operate to transmit selected wavelengths while reflecting others, or can operate to reflect selected wavelengths while transmitting others. For ease of description, the following discussion assumes that filter **808** operates in transmission mode, transmitting a selected wavelength or range of wavelengths, while reflecting others.

FIG. 8A is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary embodiment of an OADM **800** incorporating an optical filter **808**. In various embodiments, OADM **800** can comprise a narrow band OADM or a wide band OADM. In this par-

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ticular embodiment, OADM **800** comprises a static OADM capable of adding/dropping the same wavelengths or band of wavelengths. In an alternative embodiment, OADM **800** may comprise a tunable OADM capable of selectively adding/dropping different wavelengths or bands of wavelengths.

In this embodiment, optical filter **808** operates to remove one or more wavelength signals **814_{DROP}** from a multiple wavelength signal **814** and to add one or more wavelength signals **814_{ADD}** to multiple wavelength signal **814**. In this particular embodiment, signals **814_{DROP}** and **814_{ADD}** comprise a band of multiple wavelength signals.

In this embodiment, OADM **800** includes at least a first lens **806a** and a second lens **806b**. In this example, lenses **806** comprise gradient index (“GRIN”) lenses. Although this example uses two GRIN lenses **806a** and **806b**, any additional number or type of lenses may be used without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. First GRIN lens **806a** operates to direct multiple wavelength signal **814_{IN}** received from an input port **802** to optical filter **808**. First GRIN lens **806a** also operates to direct multiple wavelength signal **814_{OUT}** received from optical filter **808** to an output port **804** for further communication from OADM **800**. In a similar manner, second GRIN lens **806b** operates to direct signal **814_{DROP}** received from filter **808** to a drop port **810**. Second GRIN lens **806b** also operates to direct signal **814_{ADD}** received from an add port **812** to filter **808**.

FIG. 8B is a block diagram illustration an exemplary embodiment of an OADM **850** incorporating a wide band OADM **852** and a plurality of narrower band OADMs **854**. OADM **850** is operable to remove one or more bands of wavelength signals **858** from a multiple wavelength signal **856** and to add one or more bands of wavelength signals **862** to multiple wavelength signal **856**. In this example, OADM **850** comprises a static OADM capable of adding/dropping the same wavelengths or band of wavelengths. In an alternative embodiment, OADM **800** may comprise a tunable OADM capable of selectively adding/dropping different wavelengths or bands of wavelengths. Implementing a wide band OADM to separate one or more bands of wavelengths from a multiple wavelength signal and a plurality of narrower band OADMs to further separate the one or more bands of wavelengths separated by the wide band OADM is advantageous in reducing losses associated with OADMs.

In this example, OADM **850** includes wide band OADM **852**. In this particular embodiment, the structure and function of OADM **852** can be substantially similar to OADM **800** of FIG. 8A. OADM **852** operates to remove at least a first band of signals **858** from multiple wavelength signal **856_{IN}** received by OADM **852**. In one particular embodiment, first band of signals **858** comprises a relatively wide bandwidth of multiple wavelength signals. OADM **852** also operates to combine a second band of signals **862** with a portion of multiple wavelength signal **856_{IN}** reflected from OADM **852** to form multiple wavelength signal **856_{OUT}**.

In the illustrated embodiment, OADM **850** comprises at least a first narrower band OADM **854a** and a second narrower band OADM **854b**. Although this example includes two narrower band OADMs **854a** and **854b**, any number of additional narrower band OADMs may be implemented without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. In, this particular embodiment, the structure and function of OADMs **854a** and **854b** can be substantially similar to OADM **800** of FIG. 8A. First OADM **854a** operates to remove one or more wavelength signals **858_{DROP}** from signal **858** received by OADM **854a**. First OADM **854a** also operates to combine one or more wavelength

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signals **858_{ADD}** with a portion of signal **858** reflected from OADM **854a** to form multiple wavelength signal **860**. In a similar manner, second OADM **854b** operates to remove one or more wavelength signals **860_{DROP}** from signal **860** received by OADM **854b**. Second OADM **854b** also operates to combine one or more wavelength signals **860_{ADD}** with a portion of signal **860** reflected from OADM **854b** to form multiple wavelength signal **862**.

FIGS. 9A and 9B are block diagrams illustrating exemplary embodiments of optical add/drop multiplexers incorporating a serial combination of optical filters **908**. Implementing serial combinations of multiple cavity filters to form an OADM is advantageous in minimizing the interaction, and hence the interference, between add/drop signals.

In these particular embodiments, the structure and function of optical filters **908** can be substantially similar to multiple cavity device **100** of FIG. 1. Inventive aspects of the OADM architecture are not, however, limited to the use of multiple cavity thin film filters. Other tunable optical devices could be used. For example, micro electromechanical switching (MEMS) devices or other tunable optical devices could be used.

Optical filter **908** can operate in transmission or reflection mode. That is, filter **908** can operate to transmit selected wavelengths while reflecting others, or can operate to reflect selected wavelengths while transmitting others. For ease of description, the following discussion assumes that filter **908** operates in transmission mode, transmitting a selected wavelength or range of wavelengths, while reflecting others.

FIG. 9A is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary embodiment of an OADM **900** incorporating a serial combination of optical filters **908**. In various embodiments, OADM **900** can comprise a narrower band OADM or a wide band OADM. In this particular embodiment, OADM **900** comprises a static OADM capable of adding/dropping the same wavelengths or band of wavelengths. In an alternative embodiment, OADM **900** may comprise a tunable OADM capable of selectively adding/dropping different wavelengths or bands of wavelengths.

In this embodiment, optical filter **908a** operates to remove one or more wavelength signals **914_{DROP}** from a multiple wavelength signal **914**, while optical filter **908b** operates to add one or more wavelength signals **914_{ADD}** to multiple wavelength signal **914**. In this particular embodiment, signal **914_{DROP}** comprises a band of multiple wavelength signals.

In this embodiment, OADM **900** includes a plurality of OADM modules **912**. First OADM module **912a** includes at least a first lens **906a1** and a second lens **906b1**. In this example, lenses **906a1** and **906b1** each comprise GRIN lenses. Although this example uses two GRIN lenses **906a1** and **906b1**, any additional number or types of lenses may be used without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. First GRIN lens **906a1** operates to direct multiple wavelength signal **914_{IN}** received from an input port **902a** to optical filter **908a**. First GRIN lens **906a1** also operates to direct multiple wavelength signal **914_{PASS}** reflected from optical filter **908a** to an output port **904a** for transmission to second OADM module **912b**. Second GRIN lens **906b1** operates to direct signal **914_{DROP}** received from filter **908a** to a drop port **910**.

In this embodiment, second OADM module **912b** operates to add one or more wavelength signals to multiple wavelength signal **914_{PASS}** to form multiple wavelength signal **914_{OUT}** for communication from OADM **900**. The structure of second OADM module **912b** can be substantially similar to first OADM module **912a**. First GRIN lens

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906a2 operates to direct multiple wavelength signal **914_{PASS}** received from an input port **902b** to optical filter **908b**. First GRIN lens **906a2** also operates to direct multiple wavelength signal **914_{OUT}** reflected from and passed through optical filter **908b** to an output port **904b**. Second GRIN lens **906b2** operates to direct signal **914_{ADD}** received from an add port **916** to filter **908b**. In this particular embodiment, signal **914_{ADD}** comprises a band of multiple wavelength signals.

FIG. 9B is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary embodiment of an OADM **950** incorporating a wide band OADM **970** and a plurality of narrower band OADMs **954**. OADM **950** is operable to remove one or more bands of wavelength signals **964** from a multiple wavelength signal **962** and to add one or more bands of wavelength signals **968** to multiple wavelength signal **962**. In this example, OADM **950** comprises a static OADM capable of adding/dropping the same wavelengths or band of wavelengths. In an alternative embodiment, OADM **900** may comprise a tunable OADM capable of selectively adding/dropping different wavelengths or bands of wavelengths. Implementing a wide band OADM to separate one or more bands of wavelengths from a multiple wavelength signal and a plurality of narrower band OADMs to further separate the wavelength signals separated by the wide band OADM is advantageous in reducing losses associated with OADMs.

In this embodiment, OADM **950** includes a wide band OADM **970**. In this example, OADM **970** includes at least a first OADM module **952a** and a second OADM module **952b**. In this particular embodiment, the structure and function of first OADM module **952a** and second OADM module **952b** can be substantially similar to OADM modules **912a** and **912b** of FIG. 9A, respectively. First OADM module **952a** operates to remove at least a first band of signals **964_{IN}** from multiple wavelength signal **962_{IN}**. In one particular embodiment, first band of signals **964_{IN}** comprises a relatively wide bandwidth of multiple wavelength signals. First OADM module **952a** also operates to direct a multiple wavelength signal **962_{PASS}** to second OADM module **952b**. In a similar manner, second OADM module **952b** operates to combine a second band of signals **968** with multiple wavelength signal **962_{PASS}** to form multiple wavelength signal **962_{OUT}**.

In the illustrated embodiment, OADM **950** includes at least a first narrower band OADM **954a** and a second narrower band OADM **954b**. Although this example includes two narrower band OADMs **954a** and **954b**, any number of additional narrower band OADMs may be implemented without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. In this example, each OADM **954** includes at least a first OADM module **956a** and a second OADM module **956b**. In this particular embodiment, the structure and function of first OADM module **956a** and second OADM module **956b** can be substantially similar to OADM modules **912a** and **912b** of FIG. 9A, respectively. First OADM **954a** operates to remove one or more wavelength signals Γ_{DROP} from signal **964_{IN}** received by OADM **954a**. First OADM **954a** also operates to combine one or more wavelength signals **964_{ADD}** with a multiple wavelength signal **964_{OUT}** reflected from OADM **954a** to form a multiple wavelength signal **966_{IN}**. In a similar manner, second OADM **954b** operates to remove one or more wavelength signals **966_{DROP}** from signal **966_{IN}**. Second OADM **954b** also operates to combine one or more wavelength signals **966_{ADD}** with a multiple wavelength signal **966_{OUT}** reflected from or transmitted through OADM **954b** to form multiple wavelength signal **968**.

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3. Tunable Non-Blocking Optical Add/Drop Multiplexer

FIG. 10 is a block diagram illustrating a non-blocking tunable device 1000. As used throughout this document the term “non-blocking” refers to a tunable device that allows substantially all wavelengths received to pass through the device without significant attenuation while the device is being tuned. A “non-blocking” device does not significantly block pass-through wavelengths while the device is being tuned. In this embodiment, non-blocking tunable device 1000 includes a tunable filter 1002 operable to selectively remove one or more bands of wavelength signals 1006_{DROP} from a multiple wavelength signal 1006. Tunable filter 1002 also operates to selectively add one or more bands of wavelength signals 1006_{ADD} to signal 1006.

Tunable filter 1002 may comprise any device capable of selectively adding/dropping different bands of wavelengths, such as, for example, a multiple cavity thin film device or a plurality of gratings. Tunable filter 1002 can operate in transmission or reflection mode. That is, filter 1002 can operate to transmit selected wavelengths while reflecting others, or can operate to reflect selected wavelengths while transmitting others. For ease of description, the following discussion assumes that filter 1002 operates in reflection mode, reflecting a selected wavelength or range of wavelengths, while transmitting others.

In this embodiment, non-blocking tunable device 1000 includes a switch 1004 coupled between a drop port 1008 and an add port 1010 of filter 1002. As used throughout this document the terms “drop port” and “add port” refer to those portions of the tunable device that function to add/drop one or more wavelength signals from the tunable device. Switch 1004 may comprise any device capable of at least two operating modes. Switch 1004 operates in a first operating mode during tuning operations of filter 1002. During tuning operations, switch 1004 operates to couple drop port 1008 to add port 1010. Coupling drop port 1008 to add port 1010 enables signal 1006_{DROP} to be recombined with that portion of signal 1006 that passed through filter 1002. In that operating mode, switch 1004 also operates to substantially prevent signal 1006_{ADD}, when present, from being combined with the portion of signal 1006 that passed through filter 1002.

Switch 1004 operates in a second operating mode during steady-state or non-tuning operating conditions of filter 1002. In the second operating mode, switch 1004 decouples drop port 1008 and add port 1010, and operates to drop one or more bands of wavelength signals 1006_{DROP} from multiple wavelength signal 1006. In that operating mode, switch 1004 also operates to facilitate the combination of one or more bands of wavelength signals 1006_{ADD} to the portion of multiple wavelength signal 1006 that passed through filter 1002. In some embodiments, a synchronizer can be coupled to device 1000 to synchronize portions of signal 1006 traveling through filter 1002 with those signal portions directed through switch 1004. This can operate to deal with any latency that can be experienced by signals traversing different signal paths.

FIGS. 11A and 113 are block diagrams illustrating exemplary embodiments of non-blocking electro-optic tunable devices. In these particular embodiments, each electro-optic tunable device comprises at least one multiple cavity device 1102 or 1152. The structure and function of multiple cavity device 1102 or 1152 can be substantially similar to multiple cavity device 100 of FIG. 1.

Each multiple cavity device 1102 or 1152 can operate in transmission or reflection mode. That is, device 1102 or 1152 can operate to transmit selected wavelengths while reflecting

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others, or can operate to reflect selected wavelengths while transmitting others. For ease of description, the following discussion assumes that device 1102 or 1152 operates in transmission mode, transmitting a selected wavelength or range of wavelengths, while reflecting others.

FIG. 11A is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary embodiment of a non-blocking electro-optic tunable device 1100 implementing a serial combination of multiple cavity devices 1102. Device 1100 includes at least a first multiple cavity device 1102a and a second multiple cavity device 1102b. Although this example includes two multiple cavity devices 1102a and 1102b, any additional number of multiple cavity devices may be included without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. In this example, multiple cavity device 1102a operates to selectively add/drop one or more wavelength signals from a multiple wavelength signal by applying an electric field to device 1102a. The structure and function of device 1102a can be substantially similar to multiple cavity device 100 of FIG. 1. In this particular embodiment, multiple cavity device 1102a comprises three (3) fundamental stacks. Although device 1102a comprises three fundamental stacks in this example, any additional number of fundamental stacks can be used without departing from the scope of the present disclosure.

In this embodiment, second multiple cavity device 1102b is not physically coupled to first multiple cavity, device 1102a. In an alternative embodiment, device 1102b can be physically coupled to device 1102a. In either this embodiment or the alternative embodiment, second multiple cavity device 1102b is not coherently coupled to first multiple cavity device 1102a. In the alternative embodiment, second multiple cavity device 1102b operates to either transmit or reflect the multiple wavelength signal selectively added/dropped from first multiple cavity device 1102a. In various embodiments, second multiple cavity device 1102b can comprise, for example, a switch or a modulator. In this particular embodiment, the function of device 1102b can be substantially similar to switch 1004 of FIG. 10. The structure of device 1102b can be substantially similar to multiple cavity device 1102a.

In operation, multiple cavity device 1102b is either optically matched or optically complementary to multiple cavity device 1102a. When devices 1102b and 1102a are complementary, non-blocking electro-optic tunable device 1100 substantially prevents all wavelength signals from being added/dropped. Multiple cavity device 1102b is complementary to device 1102a during the period that device 1102a is being tuned to add/drop a desired wavelength signal or signals. In this particular embodiment, to achieve a complementary state between devices 1102a and 1102b, substantially different voltages are applied to each device. For example, if it is desired to tune device 1102a to add/drop longer wavelength signals, the voltage of device 1102b can be modified so that the optical response of device 1102b shifts toward the shorter wavelength signals. Shifting device 1102b toward the shorter wavelength signals, while device 1102a is being tuned to add/drop longer wavelength signals substantially prevents all wavelength signals from being added/dropped.

FIG. 11B is a block diagram illustrating an, exemplary embodiment of a non-blocking electro-optic tunable device 1150 implementing a serial combination of a multiple cavity device 1152 and a tunable anti-reflective coating 1154. Device 1150 includes a tunable multiple cavity device 1152 operable to selectively add/drop one or more wavelength signals from a multiple wavelength signal by applying an electric field to device 1152. The structure and function of

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device 1152 can be substantially similar to multiple cavity device 100 of FIG. 1. In this particular embodiment, multiple cavity device 1152 comprises three (3) fundamental stacks. Although device 1152 comprises three fundamental stacks in this example, any additional number of fundamental stacks can be used without departing from the scope of the present disclosure.

In this particular embodiment, non-blocking electro-optic tunable device 1150 includes a tunable anti-reflective coating 1154 co-located on a common substrate with multiple cavity device 1152. Anti-reflective coating 1154 may comprise any material with an optical characteristic capable of being manipulated by the application of an electric field, such as, for example an electro-optic material. Tunable anti-reflective coating 1154 operates to either transmit or reflect the multiple wavelength signal selectively added/dropped from tunable multiple cavity device 1152. In various embodiments, tunable anti-reflective coating 1154 can comprise, for example, a switch or a modulator. In this particular embodiment, the function of coating 1154 can be substantially similar to switch 1004 of FIG. 10.

In operation, anti-reflective coating 1154 is either optically matched or optically complementary to multiple cavity device 1152. When coating 1154 and device 1152 are complementary, non-blocking electro-optic tunable device 1150 substantially prevents all wavelength signals from being added/dropped. Anti-reflective coating 1154 is complementary to device 1152 during the period that device 1152 is being tuned to add/drop a different wavelength signal or signals.

In one particular embodiment, coating 1154 comprises a substantially similar configuration to the optical cavities of device 1152. To achieve a complementary state between coating 1154 and device 1152, significantly different voltages are applied to each. For example, if it is desired to tune device 1152 to add/drop longer wavelength signals, the voltage applied to coating 1154 can be modified so that the optical response of coating 1154 shifts toward the shorter wavelength signals. Shifting coating 1154 toward the shorter wavelengths signals, while device 1152 is being tuned to add/drop longer wavelength signals substantially prevents all wavelength signals from being added/dropped.

In another embodiment, coating 1154 comprises a substantially different configuration than the configuration of the cavities of device 1152. In this example, coating 1154 can comprise a configuration capable of passing a wide range of wavelengths. Configuring coating 1154 to have a wide pass-band provides the advantage of allowing the use of a single configuration in many non-blocking tunable optical devices. Applying a voltage to coating 1154, sufficient to shift the wide pass-band away from the desired wavelength signal, results in coating 1154 being complementary to device 1152.

FIG. 12 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary embodiment of a tunable non-blocking OADM 1200 implementing a serial combination of non-blocking electro-optic tunable optical devices 1208. OADM 1200 is operable to selectively remove one or more wavelength signals 1214_{DROP} from a multiple wavelength signal 1214_{IN} by applying an electric field to non-blocking electro-optic tunable devices 1208. OADM 1200 also operates to selectively add one or more wavelength signals 1214_{ADD} to a multiple wavelength signal 1214_{PASS} . In various embodiments, OADM 1200 can comprise a narrow band OADM or a wide band OADM. Implementing a serial combination of non-blocking electro-optic tunable devices 1208 to form OADM 1200 is advantageous in minimizing the interaction, and hence the interference, between add/drop signals.

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In various embodiments, the structure and function of non-blocking electro-optic tunable devices 1208 can be substantially similar a non-blocking electro-optic tunable device 1100 and/or 1150 of FIGS. 11A and 11B; respectively. Each non-blocking electro-optic tunable device 1208 can operate in transmission or reflection mode. That is, each device 1208 can operate to transmit selected wavelengths while reflecting others, or can operate to reflect selected wavelengths while transmitting others. For ease of description, the following discussion assumes that each device 1208 operates in transmission mode, transmitting a selected wavelength or range of wavelengths, while reflecting others.

In the illustrated embodiment, tunable non-blocking OADM 1200 includes at least a first OADM module 1212a and a second OADM module 1212b. The structure of OADM modules 1212a and 1212b can be substantially similar to OADM modules 912a and 912b of FIG. 9A, respectively. First OADM module 1212a operates to selectively remove one or more wavelength signals 1214_{DROP} from multiple wavelength signal 1214_{IN} to form multiple wavelength signal 1214_{PASS} . In a similar manner second OADM module 1212b operates to selectively add one or more wavelength signals 1214_{ADD} to multiple wavelength signal 1214_{PASS} to form multiple wavelength signal 1214_{OUT} for communication through an optical communication system. In this particular embodiment, signals 1214_{DROP} and 1214_{ADD} each comprise one or more bands of multiple wavelength signals.

In the illustrated embodiment, tunable non-blocking OADM 1200 includes a control unit 1218 operable to apply one or more control voltages to non-blocking electro-optic tunable devices 1208a and 1208b. Although this example utilizes one control unit 1218, any number of additional control units could be used without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. In one particular embodiment, control unit 1218 implements a feedback control circuit to monitor the add/drop channels from device 1200. The feedback control circuit may comprise any detection system capable of directly or indirectly measuring the capacitance of each non-blocking electro-optic tunable device 1208, such as, for example, an electrical error detection system.

In steady-state operation, first OADM module 1212a selectively removes one or more wavelength signals 1214_{DROP} from multiple wavelength signal 1214_{IN} and communicates multiple wavelength signal 1214_{PASS} from module 1212a. Second OADM module 1212b selectively combines one or more wavelength signals 1214_{ADD} to signal 1214_{PASS} and communicates multiple wavelength signal 1214_{OUT} from device 1200. In this particular embodiment, signals 1214_{DROP} and 1214_{ADD} comprise one or more bands of wavelength signals.

Before tuning OADM 1200 to add/drop a desired wavelength or wavelengths, the switch portion of each non-blocking electro-optic tunable device 1208a and 1208b is changed to a complementary state. The control voltage applied to each switch is modified to cause each switch to change from a matched state to a complementary state. While each switch is in a complementary state, first OADM module 1212a operates to communicate signal 1214_{IN} from module 1212a without removing any wavelength signals. In a similar manner, second OADM module 1212b operates to communicate signal 1214_{PASS} from module 1212b without combining any wavelength signals.

After each switch is changed from a matched state to a complementary state, the tunable OADM portion of each non-blocking electro-optic device 1208 is tuned to add/drop

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the desired wavelength or wavelengths. During tuning operations, the control voltage associated with the tunable OADM portion of each device **1208a** and **1208b** is then modified to add/drop the desired wavelength signals from device **1200**. After each tunable OADM is tuned as desired, the voltage applied to each switch is adjusted to transfer each switch from the complementary state to a matched state.

4. Feedback Control for Non-Blocking Tunable Device

In various embodiments, the non-blocking tunable optical device implements a feedback control circuit to control and monitor the optical performance of the device. The feedback control circuitry operates to change the effective length of the optical cavity, which allows the device to communicate the desired wavelength or wavelengths from the device. Modifying the effective optical cavity length of the tunable device typically results in a change in capacitance of the device. Knowing the capacitance of the device enables the system operator to ascertain, indirectly, the wavelength signal or signals being transmitted through or reflected from the tunable optical device. In various embodiments, the feedback control circuitry can implement a feedback circuit capable of directly or indirectly measuring the capacitance of the non-blocking tunable device. In one particular embodiment, the feedback control circuit operates the tunable non-blocking device in a manner similar to a voltage variable capacitor.

FIG. **13** is a block diagram of one exemplary embodiment of an electro-optic voltage variable capacitor **1300**. In this example, electro-optic voltage variable capacitor **1300** includes at least a pair of electrodes **1302** operable to receive a control signal **1304** from a feedback detection system. Electrodes **1302** are also operable to generate an electric field, based at least in part on control signal **1304**, that selectively modifies the effective length of an optical cavity of a tunable, multiple cavity device.

In this example, voltage variable capacitor **1300** includes a multiple cavity device operable to selectively add/drop one or more wavelength signals. In various embodiments, the structure and function of the multiple cavity device can be substantially similar to any of the multiple cavity devices illustrated in FIGS. **1** through **6**. In this particular embodiment, the multiple cavity device can be substantially similar to non-blocking electro-optic tunable device **1100** and/or **1150** of FIGS. **11A** and **11b**, respectively. Capacitor **1300** operates to generate a feedback signal **1306** based on the effective length of an optical cavity of the tunable multiple cavity device. In one particular embodiment, feedback signal **1306** comprises an electrical signal representing the capacitance of the tunable multiple cavity device. This aspect of the disclosure provides an advantage of reducing or eliminating a need for optical sensors, such as spectral analyzers to control the tunable optical device. Instead, this approach allows the use of simpler and less expensive electronic sensing and control circuitry.

Control signal **1304** may comprise, for example, an adjustment voltage or an error signal received from a feedback detection system. In some embodiments, the feedback system may comprise, for example, an analog or a digital feedback system.

FIG. **14** is a block diagram of one exemplary embodiment of a digital feedback control system **1400**. In this example, system **1400** includes a voltage controlled oscillator **1450** operable to generate a feedback control signal **1406**. In one particular embodiment, voltage controlled oscillator **1450** includes voltage controlled capacitor **1300** of FIG. **13**.

System **1400** also includes a first counter **1456** coupled to oscillator **1450** and operable to generate a feedback count

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1457. In this particular example, first counter **1456** operates to divide feedback signal **1414** by an amount determined by a digital signal **1455** representing a desired optical characteristic. System **1400** further includes a phase comparator **1460** operable to generate a control signal **1404**, and a filter **1462** coupled between comparator **1460** and voltage controlled oscillator **1450**. In this particular example, phase comparator **1460** operates to compare the phase of a reference count **1465** to the phase of feedback count **1457**. Filter **1462** filters control signal **1404** to generate control signal **1304** of FIG. **13**.

In this particular embodiment, system **1400** includes a set point module **1454** operable to determine the desired optical characteristic of one or more optical cavities coupled to system **1400**. Set point module **1454** also operates to generate digital signal **1455** representing the desired optical characteristic.

System **1400** also includes a reference voltage controlled oscillator **1458** operable to generate an approximately constant reference frequency **1459**. In this example, system **1400** includes a second counter **1464** coupled to reference oscillator **1458** and operable to generate reference count **1465** based at least in part on reference frequency **1459**. The embodiment shown in FIG. **14** provides just one example of control circuitry that can be used in conjunction with a tunable optical device.

5. Surface Normal Modulator

FIG. **15** is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary embodiment of a surface normal modulator **1500**. In an alternative embodiment, surface normal modulator **1500** can function as an optical switch. In this example, surface normal modulator **1500** includes a plurality of tunable filters **1502a-1502n** each operable to receive a different wavelength signal **1508a-1508n**. The plurality of tunable filters **1502** may comprise an array of tunable filters formed on a common substrate. Each tunable filter **1502** may comprise any device capable of providing a relatively high contrast ratio. In one particular embodiment, the relatively high contrast ratio of each tunable filter **1502** comprises at least five (5) decibels. In various embodiments, the relatively high contrast ratio can comprise ten (10) decibels or more, twenty (20) decibels or more, or thirty (30) decibels or more.

In this embodiment, each tunable filter **1502** operates by shifting between a substantially transmissive state and a substantially reflective state. This change in operating state can be accomplished by changing a single-pass optical path or the effective cavity length of each tunable filter **1502**. Good contrast ratios can be maintained even when the effective cavity length or the single-pass optical path of the tunable optical filter is changed by an amount that corresponds to a phase shift of less than $\pi/2$ for at least one wavelength.

In some embodiments, each tunable filter **1502** may comprise a tunable filter designed with its filter response centered on the particular wavelength signal **1508** received from optical light source **1504**. Applying a control signal to each filter **1502** operates to shift the particular filter **1502** from transmitting the particular wavelength signal **1508** received to reflecting that wavelength signal **1508**. In other embodiments, each tunable filter **1502** may comprise a tunable filter designed with its filter response not specifically centered on the particular wavelength signal **1508** received from optical light source **1504**. Applying a specific control signal to each filter **1502** operates to shift the particular tunable filter **1502** from reflecting that particular wavelength signal **1508** to transmitting that wavelength signal **1508**. In various embodiments, each filter **1502** comprises a substan-

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tially similar filter structure, designed to pass different wavelength signals upon application of substantially different control signals. In some embodiments, each filter **1502** comprises a substantially different filter structure, designed to pass different wavelengths upon application of a common control signal.

Each tunable filter **1502** can operate in transmission or reflection mode. That is, filter **1502** can operate to transmit selected wavelengths while reflecting others, or can operate to reflect selected wavelengths while transmitting others. For ease of description, the following discussion assumes that filter **1502** operates in transmission mode, transmitting a selected wavelength or range of wavelengths, while reflecting others.

In one particular embodiment, each tunable filter **1502** generates a square-like or flat-top filter response, which provides a contrast ratio of at least five (5) decibels. In various embodiments, the square-like response can comprise a -1 decibel bandwidth of at least 12.5 giga-Hertz, 20 giga-Hertz, 25 giga-Hertz or more. In other embodiments, the square-like response can comprise a -30 decibel bandwidth of at least 500 giga-Hertz, 250 giga-Hertz, 100 giga-Hertz or less.

One aspect of this disclosure recognizes that a tunable filter comprising a square-like filter response and a contrast ratio of at least five (5) decibels enables the tunable filter to be used as a digital modulator or encoder. That is, the square-like filter function of each tunable filter **1502** allows each wavelength signal **1508** received by its respective filter **1502** to be selectively reflected or transmitted, as desired, by introducing a relatively small change in the effective cavity length of filter **1502**. For example, where a filter response is initially capable of transmitting the 1550 nm wavelength, changing the effective cavity length of the filter shifts the filter response and enable filter **1502** to reflect the 1550 nm wavelength. In some embodiments, the change in effective cavity length or single-pass optical path of the optical cavity can correspond to a phase shift of less than $\pi/2$, for at least one wavelength. In other embodiments, the change in effective cavity length or single-pass optical path of the optical cavity can correspond to a phase shift of $\pi/4$ or less, or $\pi/100$ or less.

In one particular embodiment, each tunable filter **1502** may comprise a tunable multiple cavity device capable of generating a square-like response. In one example, the structure and function of each tunable filter **1502** can be substantially similar to multiple cavity device **100** of FIG. 1. In this example, the speed of each filter depends at least in part on the response time of the electro-optic material used to form the optical cavity of tunable filter **1502** and on the capacitance of each filter **1502**. The electro-optic material may comprise any material capable of supporting a relatively rapid modulation rate, such as, for example, lithium niobate or lithium tantalate. In some embodiments, each tunable filter **1502** is capable of tuning/modulating at a rate of 9.5 gigabits per second or more. In addition, it is advantageous to maintain a relatively low capacitance of each filter **1502** to generate a time constant that is as short as possible, for example, one hundred (100) picoseconds or less.

In this particular embodiment, surface normal modulator **1500** receives a plurality of different wavelength signals **1508a-1508n** from an optical light source **1504**. Optical light source **1504** may comprise any light source or combination of sources capable of generating a plurality of different wavelengths of light. For example, light source **1504** may comprise a plurality of laser diodes, a plurality of

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light emitting diodes, or a broadband light source with an array of optical filters to form individual wavelength signals. In one particular embodiment, optical light source **1504** comprises an array of laser diodes. Forming optical light source **1504** into an array is advantageous in reducing the cost and size of optical light source **1504**. In other embodiments, optical light source **1504** can be co-located with surface normal modulator **1500** on a common substrate.

In this particular embodiment, surface normal modulator **1500** operates to modulate information onto wavelength signals **1508** by changing the effective cavity length of each of the plurality of tunable filters **1502**. In this example, each tunable filter **1502** receives a control signal from a data controller **1506**. The control signal operates to change the effective cavity length of each filter **1502**, which, in turn, modulates information onto wavelength signals **1508**. The control signals generated by controller **1506** may comprise any signals capable of changing the effective cavity length of each tunable filter **1502**, such as, for example, one or more electrical signals. In one particular embodiment, controller **1506** and surface normal modulator **1500** may be co-located on the same substrate.

In one particular embodiment, data controller **1506** modulates a digital signal onto each of the plurality of wavelength signals **1508**. For example, when controller **1506** generates a control signal to change the operating state of tunable filter **1502a** from a reflecting state to a transmitting state, wavelength signal **1508a** is transmitted through filter **1502a**, thus generating a "1". When controller **1506** generates a control signal to change the operating state of filter **1502a** from transmitting state to reflecting state, wavelength signal **1508a** is reflected, thus generating a "0".

Although the present invention has been described in several embodiments, a myriad of changes, variations, alterations, transformations, and modifications may be suggested to one skilled in the art, and it is intended that the present invention encompass such changes, variations, alterations, transformation, and modifications, as falling within the spirit and scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A tunable optical device comprising:

thin film device comprising a plurality of cavities each comprising an electro-optic material, the electro-optic material comprising an optical characteristic capable of being manipulated by application of an electric field; wherein at least some of the plurality of cavities are physically coupled to others of the plurality of cavities; and

wherein the plurality of cavities comprise a sufficient number of cavities to result in an approximately square frequency response for the device, the approximately square frequency response comprising a frequency response with a -1 decibel bandwidth of no less than 20 GHZ.

2. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the tunable optical device comprises a band optical add/drop multiplexer.

3. The tunable optical device of claim 2, wherein the band optical add/drop multiplexer comprises a serial combination of thin film devices.

4. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the thin film device comprises a plurality of Fabry-Perot structures.

5. The tunable optical device of claim 4, wherein each of the Fabry-Perot structures comprises a substantially similar structure.

6. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the electro-optic material completely fills at least one of the plurality of cavities.

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7. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the thin film device comprises a device selected from the group consisting of a switch, a filter, an optical add/drop multiplexer, and a modulator.

8. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein each optical cavity comprises a substantially similar electro-optic material.

9. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein at least two of the plurality of cavities contain different electro-optic materials.

10. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the electro-optic material comprises a material selected from a group consisting of Lithium Niobate, Lithium Tantalate, Strontium Barium Niobate, and Lanthanum modified Lead Zirconate Titanate.

11. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the electro-optic material comprises a liquid crystal material.

12. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the electro-optic material comprises a substantially uniaxial crystalline material.

13. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the electro-optic material comprises a crystal axis that is substantially parallel to the electric field applied to the thin film device.

14. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the optical characteristic comprises an index of refraction of the electro-optic material.

15. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the optical characteristic comprises a polarization property of the electro-optic material.

16. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of a multiple wavelength optical signal incident on the thin film device is transmitted through each of the plurality of cavities and wherein at least a portion of the optical signal is reflected from the thin film device, the determination of the transmitted and reflected signal portions being based at least in part on the electric field applied to the electro-optic material residing in each cavity.

17. The tunable optical device of claim 16, wherein the at least a portion of a multiple wavelength optical signal transmitted through each of the plurality of optical cavities comprises one or more optical signal wavelengths.

18. The tunable optical device of claim 16, wherein the at least a portion of the multiple wavelength signal reflected from the thin film device comprises one or more optical signal wavelengths.

19. The tunable optical device of claim 16, wherein the electric field is applied substantially parallel to a direction of propagation of the multiple wavelength optical signal received by the thin film device.

20. The tunable optical device of claim 16, wherein the electric field is applied substantially perpendicular to a direction of propagation of the multiple wavelength optical signal received by the thin film device.

21. The tunable optical device of claim 16, wherein the electric field is applied substantially perpendicular to a polarization axis of at least one of a pair of approximately orthogonally polarized beam components.

22. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the plurality of cavities comprises at least three (3) cavities collectively capable of producing the approximately square frequency response.

23. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the plurality of cavities comprises at least five (5) cavities collectively capable of producing the approximately square frequency response.

24. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the approximately square frequency response comprises a frequency response with a -1 decibel bandwidth of no less than 25 GHz.

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25. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the approximately square frequency response comprises a frequency response with a -30 decibel bandwidth of no more than 500 GHz.

26. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the approximately square frequency response comprises a frequency response with a -30 decibel bandwidth of no more than 250 GHz.

27. The tunable optical device of claim 1, wherein the approximately square frequency response comprises a frequency response with a -30 decibel bandwidth of no more than 200 GHz.

28. The tunable optical device of claim 27, wherein the plurality of electrodes comprises a separate pair of electrodes for each of the plurality of optical cavities.

29. The tunable optical device of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of electrodes operable to create the electric field applied to the thin film device.

30. The tunable optical device of claim 29, wherein the plurality of electrodes comprises at least two (2) electrodes.

31. The tunable optical device of claim 1, further comprising a polarization diversity assembly operable to form a substantially polarization independent thin film device.

32. A tunable optical device comprising:

a thin film device comprising at least one cavity comprising an electro-optic material, the electro-optic material comprising an optical characteristic capable of being manipulated by application of an electric field;

wherein at least a portion of a multiple wavelength optical signal incident on the thin film device is transmitted through the at least one cavity and wherein at least a portion of the optical signal is reflected from the thin film device, the determination of the transmitted and reflected signal portions based at least in part on the electric field applied to the electro-optic material residing in each cavity; and

wherein the thin film device substantially achieves polarization independence and substantially achieves a polarization dependent loss of two (2) decibels or less for at least one wavelength of the multiple wavelength optical signal.

33. The tunable optical device of claim 32, wherein the at least one cavity comprises three (3) or more cavities.

34. The tunable optical device of claim 32, wherein the electro-optic material comprises a liquid crystal material.

35. The tunable optical device of claim 32, wherein the optical characteristic comprises an index of refraction of the electro-optic material.

36. The tunable optical device of claim 32, wherein the electric field is applied substantially parallel to a direction of propagation of the multiple wavelength optical signal received by the thin film device.

37. The tunable optical device of claim 32, wherein the electro-optic material comprises a substantially uniaxial crystalline material.

38. The tunable optical device of claim 32, wherein the electro-optic material comprises a crystal axis that is substantially parallel to the electric field applied to the thin film device.

39. The tunable optical device of claim 32, wherein the thin film device substantially achieves a polarization dependent loss of one (1) decibel or less for at least one wavelength of the multiple wavelength optical signal.

40. The tunable optical device of claim 32, wherein the thin film device substantially achieves a polarization dependent loss of one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) decibel or less for at least one wavelength of the multiple wavelength optical signal.

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41. The tunable optical device of claim 32, further comprising a polarization diversity assembly operable to form a substantially polarization independent thin film device.

42. The tunable optical device of claim 32, wherein the polarization diversity assembly comprises:

a first polarization beam splitter operable to spatially separate the multiple wavelength optical signal into two approximately orthogonally polarized beam components; and

a plurality of transversely configured thin film devices each operable to receive one of the approximately orthogonally polarized beam components,

wherein the electric field is applied independently to each of the plurality of transversely configured thin film devices; and wherein each electric field is applied substantially parallel to a polarization axis of the approximately orthogonally polarized beam component received by each of the plurality of transversely configured thin film devices.

43. A tunable optical device comprising:

a thin film device comprising at least one cavity comprising an electro-optic material, the electro-optic material comprising an optical characteristic capable of being manipulated by application of an electric field;

wherein at least a portion of a multiple wavelength optical signal incident on the thin film device is transmitted through the at least one cavity and wherein at least a portion of the optical signal is reflected from the thin film device, the determination of the transmitted and reflected signal portions based at least in part on the electric field applied to the electro-optic material residing in each cavity; and

wherein a ripple penalty associated with the at least a portion of the multiple wavelength signal that travels through the at least one optical cavity comprises approximately one (1) decibel or less.

44. The tunable optical device of claim 43, wherein the at least one cavity comprises three (3) or more cavities.

45. The tunable optical device of claim 43, wherein the electro-optic material comprises a material selected from a group consisting of Lithium Niobate, Lithium Tantalate, Strontium Barium Niobate, and Lanthanum modified Lead Zirconate Titanate.

46. The tunable optical device of claim 43, wherein the electro-optic material comprises a liquid crystal material.

47. The tunable optical device of claim 43, further comprising:

a plurality of electrodes operable to create the electric field applied to the thin film device; and

at least one ripple layer operable to substantially control the ripple penalty associated with the at least a portion of the multiple wavelength signal that travels through the at least one optical cavity.

48. A method of selectively communicating an optical signal from a tunable optical device, comprising:

receiving a multiple wavelength signal at a thin film device comprising a plurality of cavities each comprising an electro-optic material;

manipulating an optical characteristic associated with the electro-optic material by application of an electric field to the thin film device; and

selectively communicating one or more wavelengths of the multiple wavelength signal based at least in part on the applied electric field;

wherein at least some of the plurality of cavities are physically coupled to others of the plurality of cavities; and

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wherein the plurality of cavities comprises a sufficient number of cavities to result in an approximately square frequency response for the device, the approximately square frequency response comprising a frequency response with a -1 decibel bandwidth of no less than 20 GHz.

49. The method of communicating of claim 48, wherein the electro-optic material completely fills at least one of the plurality of cavities.

50. The method of communicating of claim 48, wherein each optical cavity comprises a substantially similar electro-optic material.

51. The method of communicating of claim 48, wherein the electro-optic material comprises a crystal axis that is substantially parallel to the electric field applied to the thin film device.

52. The method of communicating of claim 48, wherein manipulating the optical characteristic comprises changing a polarization property of the electro-optic material.

53. The method of communicating of claim 48, wherein selectively passing one or more wavelengths of the multiple wavelength signal comprises changing the electric field applied to the thin film device.

54. The method of communicating of claim 48, wherein the electric field applied to the thin film device creates an effective tuning range of the electro-optic material no less than ten (10) nanometers.

55. The method of communicating of claim 48, wherein the electric field is applied substantially parallel to a direction of propagation of the multiple wavelength optical signal received by the thin film device.

56. The method of communicating of claim 48, wherein the electric field is applied substantially perpendicular to a direction of propagation of the multiple wavelength optical signal received by the thin film device.

57. The method of communicating of claim 48, wherein the plurality of cavities comprises at least three (3) cavities collectively capable of producing the approximately square frequency response.

58. The method of communicating of claim 57, wherein each of the cavities comprises a substantially similar cavity length.

59. The method of communicating of claim 57, wherein the electric field is applied to each cavity individually to achieve a substantially similar effective cavity length.

60. The method of communicating of claim 48, wherein the approximately square frequency response comprises a frequency response with a -30 decibel bandwidth of no more than 500 GHz.

61. A tunable optical device comprising:

a thin film device comprising at least three (3) cavities, each cavity comprising an electro-optic material, the electro-optic material comprising an optical characteristic capable of being manipulated by application of an electric field;

wherein at least a portion of a multiple wavelength optical signal incident on the thin film device is transmitted through the at least three (3) cavities and wherein at least a portion of the optical signal is reflected from the thin film device, the determination of the transmitted and reflected signal portions based at least in part on the electric field applied to the electro-optic material residing in each cavity; and

wherein the thin film device substantially achieves polarization independence and wherein the thin film device substantially achieves a polarization dependent loss of two (2) decibels or less for at least one wavelength of the multiple wavelength optical signal.

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62. A tunable optical device comprising:

a thin film device comprising at least one cavity comprising a liquid crystal material, the liquid crystal material comprising an optical characteristic capable of being manipulated by application of an electric field;

wherein at least a portion of a multiple wavelength optical signal incident on the thin film device is transmitted through the at least one cavity and wherein at least a portion of the optical signal is reflected from the thin film device, the determination of the transmitted and reflected signal portions based at least in part on the electric field applied to the liquid crystal material residing in each cavity; and

wherein the thin film device substantially achieves polarization independence and wherein the thin film device substantially achieves a polarization dependent loss of two (2) decibels or less for at least one wavelength of the multiple wavelength optical signal.

63. A tunable optical device comprising:

a thin film device comprising at least one cavity comprising an electro-optic material, the electro-optic material comprising an optical characteristic capable of being manipulated by application of an electric field, wherein the electro-optic material comprises a crystal axis that is substantially parallel to the electric field applied to the thin film device;

wherein at least a portion of a multiple wavelength optical signal incident on the thin film device is transmitted through the at least one cavity and wherein at least a portion of the optical signal is reflected from the thin film device, the determination of the transmitted and reflected signal portions based at least in part on the

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electric field applied to the electro-optic material residing in each cavity; and

wherein the thin film device substantially achieves polarization independence and wherein the thin film device substantially achieves a polarization dependent loss of two (2) decibels or less for at least one wavelength of the multiple wavelength optical signal.

64. A tunable optical device comprising:

a thin film device comprising at least three (3) cavities, each cavity comprising an electro-optic material, the electro-optic material comprising an optical characteristic capable of being manipulated by application of an electric field;

wherein at least a portion of a multiple wavelength optical signal incident on the thin film device is transmitted through the at least three (3) cavities and wherein at least a portion of the optical signal is reflected from the thin film device, the determination of the transmitted and reflected signal portions based at least in part on the electric field applied to the electro-optic material residing in each cavity; and

wherein the thin film device reduces a ripple penalty associated with the at least a portion of the multiple wavelength signal that travels through the at least three (3) optical cavities, the ripple penalty associated with the at least a portion of the multiple wavelength signal comprising approximately three (3) decibels or less.

65. The tunable optical device of claim **64**, wherein the ripple penalty associated with the at least a portion of the multiple wavelength signal comprises approximately two (2) decibels or less.

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